Commentary

VOLUME ONE HUNDRED • NUMBER FOUR • OCTOBER 1995

Deterring China

Arthur Waldron

Will Affirmative Action Survive?
Arch Puddington

My Life Without Leonard Cohen
Ruth R. Wisse

Capitalism for Humans
George Weigel

The Jewish Voice
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Charity Begins at School
Chester E. Finn, Jr. and Gregg Vanourek

The Vulgar Virtuoso
Terry Teachout

Books in Review: Walter A. McDougall / David Berger / John Gross / Adam Schulman / Richard Brookhiser

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VOLUME 100 NUMBER FOUR OCTOBER 1995

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Letters from Readers

Valedictory

We received an extraordinary number of letters—from COMMENTARY *readers, writers, colleagues, supporters, and friends—in response to Norman Podhoretz's retirement and to his article, "Editing Commentary: A Valedictory" (June). The excerpts that follow are from readers.*—EDS.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I first ran across COMMENTARY in a bookstore in 1948. In those days, the magazine had a liberal bent, but its liberalism was tempered by moderation. COMMENTARY's evolution toward a more conservative point of view influenced my own development in the same direction. Like the magazine, I have retained the old, truly liberal values of giving all citizens a fair shake, regardless of race, creed, or color.

As time passed, COMMENTARY took on the personality and outlook of its then new editor, Norman Podhoretz. Today, it has become the courageous advocate of a moderate neoconservative view, catering neither to the far Right nor to the so-called moderate Left.

I am proud that in my eighth decade I have grown along with COMMENTARY. My own evolution from the claustrophobic limits of the old leftism to my present moderate (or neo-) conservatism has been due in no small measure to the inspiration of the magazine and its courageous editor, Norman Podhoretz.

SAM BLUEFARB
Diamond Bar, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I have been a subscriber to COMMENTARY for about 40 years and continued my subscription after I settled in Israel. I always look forward to each new issue and I have not been disappointed yet. In his own articles and in presenting the work of others, Norman Podhoretz has led the good fight against Yitzhak Rabin's dangerous and defeatist policy toward the PLO and other Arab enemies of Israel.

M. BORGER
Jerusalem, Israel

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I was saddened to learn of Norman Podhoretz's retirement. Under his stewardship, COMMENTARY has indeed been the "top gun" in championing liberty and reason. The magazine's fervent anti-Communism encouraged me to believe that it was premature to write the West off and gave me hope for the future.

PAVEL BRATINKA
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Prague, The Czech Republic

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Among the greatest compliments one can pay to anyone is to say of him that he has made a difference. As Norman Podhoretz begins a new adventure in life, he should always be proud of the fact that he has radically changed America's political and intellectual landscape.

MATTHEW BROOKS
Jewish Policy Center
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It was James Q. Wilson who, more than twenty years ago, urged me to read COMMENTARY regularly. I took his excellent advice. The magazine has consistently been among the most clear-sighted, analytically powerful, and stimulating of any that I read. I strongly hope that Mr. Podhoretz will continue to write and speak with the same vigor as before.

PETER B. CLARK
La Jolla, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz should know how much he has touched the lives of so many of us. I have often wondered where he found the energy to proceed constructively and vigorously into areas where no one else had the courage or expertise to challenge the establishment.

To withstand the contempt Mr. Podhoretz's detractors have used to isolate and intimidate him must have taken special courage. And we have all been the beneficiaries of this courage.

M. DONALD COLEMAN
Mamaroneck, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I have been a subscriber for something like 30 or 35 years, and in my experience COMMENTARY has been without question the best magazine in America. In its pages I have been introduced to many powerful thinkers, splendid writers, and original minds.

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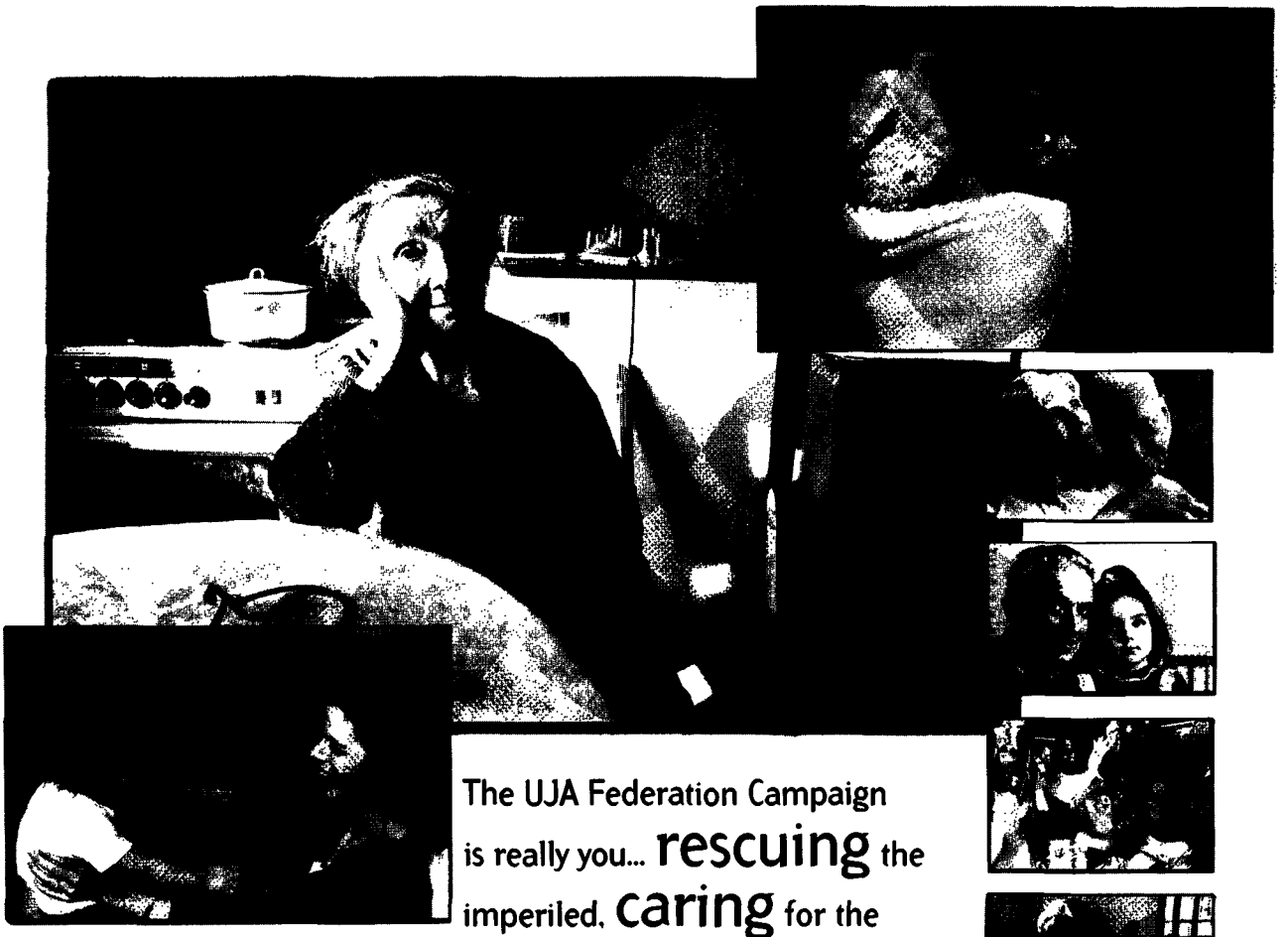

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Norman Podhoretz and COMMENTARY under his leadership are to be congratulated for aiming to be right rather than popular. I think the magazine and its writers are on target as to the key problems in American society today and where the search for solutions should begin.

NEIL E. FALCONER
Lafayette, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Since I started reading COMMENTARY over fifteen years ago, it has become *the* indispensable journal for me. I thank Norman Podhoretz for maintaining unyielding standards and for debating issues which many would prefer to consider closed.

Much has changed in the last two decades. It is hard sometimes to remember how different the world looked in 1978 or 1979. In those earlier, bleaker times, Mr. Podhoretz's courage, intelligence, and clear-sightedness were precious beyond measure. He helped to change the world, and few men can claim that.

CRAIG DOUGLAS HENRY
Charlotte, North Carolina

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz made COMMENTARY into the best magazine in America—hell, in the world!

JAN VAN HOUTEN
Groningen, The Netherlands

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I vividly remember the years when I thought that freedom would surely lose to totalitarianism. It was then that I turned to COMMENTARY for hope and sanity. And now the virulent strain of totalitarianism is dead.

NED MCCUNE
Costa Mesa, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In an age marked by intellectual cowardice, Norman Podhoretz has been a voice of reason and hence of courage. I believe it was F.A. Hayek who wrote that in any time or place the party of freedom would always be a small minority. Nonetheless, even as a minority of one, its value is beyond measure. Thus, upon reading of Norman Podhoretz's retirement, I thought it appropriate to thank him for his 35 years of public service to the Jewish community in America and to the country.

GARY M. OSEN
Englewood, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I stumbled upon COMMENTARY a few years ago, and I now look forward each month to the pleasure of reading and learning from its brilliant writers.

Thank you, Norman Podhoretz, for shaping opinion on so many crucial issues confronting us today.

P.J. PALM-PEIPMAN
The Scots College
Sydney, Australia

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

With sadness I take note of Norman Podhoretz's departure from COMMENTARY. In his 35 years as editor he created probably the best magazine in America.

JESSE R. PITTS
Charlottesville, Virginia

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I just want to say that COMMENTARY, which I have read steadily for about twenty years, has been important to me: thoroughly informative and very encouraging to a sympathetic reader in Britain, where we have nothing at all comparable.

IAN ROBINSON
University of Swansea
Wales, UK

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Under Norman Podhoretz's direction, COMMENTARY has filled a critical need in the Jewish world. It is good to know that Mr. Podhoretz will continue writing and giving us the benefit of his sound sense, concern for Jewish and humane values, and felicitous prose.

EDGAR E. SISKIN
Jerusalem Center for
Anthropological Studies
Jerusalem, Israel

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz was in the forefront of the fight to expose the evils of Soviet totalitarianism, and he has also led the opposition to the new barbarism that goes under the name of political correctness. For this, all who try to uphold the highest standards of civilized society are grateful.

PHILIP E. SOPHER
Geneva, Switzerland

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz's valedictory was typically wise and perceptive. Mr. Podhoretz has given so much to all of us that our debt will be impossible to repay—and that debt extends to the moral and intellectual realms of our lives.

CLARENCE WALTON
The American College
Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania

Foreign Policy

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Robert Kagan's superb article ["A Retreat from Power?," July] is a wake-up call for Republicans. The GOP has a well-earned reputation for competence in the national-security field and should not squander it. Mr. Kagan is perceptive in his analysis of the disappointing tendencies among the Republicans and of the risk that the necessary critique of Clintonism might spill over into a more wholesale rejection of international involvement.

I am less convinced, however, of Mr. Kagan's thesis that the philosophy of geopolitical "realism" is a major cause of Republican lapses. More persuasive is his discussion of the institutional factor—the temptations of congressional opposition. There is also the problem, as he notes, that the Republicans are still spooked by the strategy of "it's the economy, stupid," which Bill Clinton used in his election campaign; they think the country no longer cares about foreign policy in the post-cold-war world and are afraid, like George Bush, to advertise their interest in it. The fallacy in such reticence is that while Americans are not preoccupied with foreign affairs, at the very least they expect *their President* to be the master of these issues; it is part of his job-description. President Clinton's ineptitude will be an important campaign issue in the hands of any Republican able to take advantage of it.

The 1996 campaign, I expect, will concentrate Republicans' minds on thinking presidentially again. Aside from Patrick J. Buchanan, no leading GOP contender is playing the isolationist card. Instead, they all seem to be taking positions—on free trade, the preservation of alliances, enlarging NATO, taking a more geopolitical view of Russia, slowing the decline in our defense posture—that are more internationalist than the administration's. Foreign aid and UN peacekeeping, the main targets of congressional assault, are hardly the core of our national security. The fact that Democrats

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think so is more a reflection on them than on the Republicans.

The Republicans are right to stress their rejection of Clinton's seemingly mindless universalism and "multilateralism." In this context, a dose of realism is appropriate—to reassure the American people that their leaders know the difference between what is important to our national interest and what is not. Only on this basis can public support for foreign engagement be rebuilt.

If a Republican is elected President in 1996, he will be in a position to champion a more self-confident American role in global leadership—and to command support for it. But even he would be wise to concentrate, once in office, on the main pillars of the international structure—maintaining our alliances, the overall balance of power, and the security of key regions—and to avoid global crusading and overcommitment.

PETER W. RODMAN
Nixon Center for Peace
and Freedom
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Robert Kagan's article deserves the attention of the Republican leaders. As Mr. Kagan points out, the Republican record is mixed, and its spectacular successes have come not from the party's ideology but mainly from the idiosyncratic views of President Ronald Reagan. Certainly mainstream Republican thinking has been committed, as Mr. Kagan argues, to the separation of American democracy's moral fervor from foreign policy. Such a position fails to grasp the fact that a key element of American international power is precisely its capacity for great moral indignation. He might have added that President Clinton acts like a 1920's Republican by redefining foreign policy as mainly trade policy and backing away from international-security challenges.

In the end, however, Mr. Kagan leaves us with only the pious hope that the 1996 elections will stir the Republicans to address their failings. Is that a serious prospect? Senator Lugar has made an active foreign policy a major issue, and Senator Dole has advanced a few assertive foreign-policy positions while chiding Clinton's feckless international leadership. None of the several other candidates acts as though foreign policy is part of governing. Something more is needed than hope.

Can the Republican philosophy of government accommodate a truly internationalist viewpoint, combining power with American ideals? It can, but the theorist for such a position has yet to emerge. The empirical basis for the theory has long been before our eyes but unacknowledged. The dynamic global economy of the cold-war era was made possible in large part because American military power provided an umbrella in Western Europe and East Asia under which markets could thrive with lower transaction costs than ever before. Will those costs remain low if America retreats from power? Will our present prosperity continue? Hardly!

If Republicans are the party of business and economic prosperity, they must face up to the costs of international business. That means indefinitely keeping the alliance systems that prevent Germany and Japan from being left to the fate that Mr. Kagan predicts—isolated as their military ties to the United States wither, mistrusted by their neighbors, forced to seek their own security through policies that deepen that mistrust. It also means a sustained effort to expand the number of liberal democracies with market economies. As Samuel Huntington has argued, when U.S. power has been passive abroad, democracy suffers. When it has been assertive, democracy has expanded. He could have added that so, too, has the international economy.

The domestic analogue of this proposition has yet to be articulated in the Republican attack on too much government. The problem is not too much government; it is the wrong kind of government. Adam Smith clearly understood this distinction. A strong government as the uncorrupted enforcer of rules of the market and as the supplier of "public goods" is essential for free enterprise. A big government involved in allocating large amounts of wealth is the enemy of the market and prosperity. The Republican attack has been against the latter kind of government, with little emphasis on the importance of the former.

This principle is also a good guide for foreign policy. Direct economic-aid grants to governments often contribute to corruption and to the expansion of government power. Many U.S. dollars have been spent in precisely this way. Expenditures that lower the

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levels of war and violence contribute to international economic prosperity. U.S. dollars devoted to military support for NATO and the alliances with Japan and South Korea have paid handsome profits in the interdependent global economy. International organizations such as the United Nations, the World Bank, and the IMF, which deal with global "public-goods" issues, also contribute to international welfare; their effectiveness might be challenged, but the tasks remain.

The end of the cold war does not invalidate these propositions, as the "guns-versus-butter" concept suggests. "Butter" production is dependent on "guns" for the maintenance of order, and the two are not always interchangeable. The American security empire of the cold-war period not only contained Soviet power, it also made possible unprecedented Western economic growth, a point lost on Republicans like Buchanan and on most Democrats.

The deep irony in Mr. Kagan's analysis is that, in their political philosophy, the Republicans have the strongest arguments for an assertive post-cold-war foreign policy based on a mix of power and idealism—but they do not use them. And, as Mr. Kagan notes, public-opinion polls suggest that most Americans are not yet ready to cast off our country's role in using power to sustain a just international order . . . they only await leaders who will give their subliminal comprehension a public voice.

WILLIAM E. ODOM
Hudson Institute
Washington, D.C.

Health Care

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "What To Do About Health Care" [June], David Frum discusses a major question facing Americans today: whether to accept the Clinton approach to health care (or some variant thereof involving the government) or leave it to the private sector. Unfortunately, no matter which system is used, the results would in all likelihood be the same, . . . for both the public and private sectors have put their faith in the untested capability of "managed care" in combination with health-maintenance-organizations (HMO's). . . . This is bad news for middle-class Americans who are being shoved by the government as well as by the private sector into HMO's . . . and are being forced into a system which allows no choice of doctor or hospital and even makes them pay the bill.

Many questions about for-profit HMO's using managed-care techniques continue to worry Americans. Do techniques like utilization reviews and second surgical opinions, as they are currently practiced, really increase quality, access, and freedom of choice while containing costs? And will there be enough money for future medical education, training, and research? Probably not. As the *New York Times* observed recently:

> Health-maintenance organizations and other managed-care groups . . . refuse to pay for training or research that does not directly benefit their enrollees. Private markets do not pay for public goods, like research, that will eventually benefit everyone but not necessarily anyone in particular.

Even the General Accounting Office (GAO), the research wing of Congress, concluded in its study of managed care that although many employers believe, in principle, that managed-care plans save money, "little empirical evidence exists on the cost savings." . . .

In addition, managed care presents an ethical dilemma for doctors and a quality-of-care issue for patients. Marco A. Robin of Indiana University warns:

> Typically, managed-care organizations use primary-care physicians as gatekeepers and provide incentives for them to limit referrals to specialists. Such compensation arrangements create a direct incentive to limit the use of resources. Some managed-care organizations spread the financial risk among groups of doctors. All such incentives, however, create conflicts of interest: physicians have an incentive to reduce services even when it is in the patient's interest to receive them and their responsibility as fiduciaries to provide them.

There is little doubt that we now have the best-trained doctors, dentists, nurses, and other health professionals, and that our pharmaceutical and medical research is

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JOHNNY MOORE
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

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second to none; Uwe Reinhardt, Princeton University economist and health-care expert, has called our system "the most innovative and technically sophisticated in the world." And he has also pointed out that "When Americans speak of health-system reform, they typically do not think of revamping the mix of professionals and facilities that render health care. Instead, they focus on the way health care is financed."

What needs to be addressed in order to keep down health-care costs is not so much the system as the far more serious problems of American society. . . . Comparing the U.S. with other countries can be an exercise in futility: more Americans engage in high-risk behaviors than people in any other developed country. We have more drug-abuse-related illnesses; more AIDS; more pelvic-inflammatory disease; more teenage, unwanted, out-of-wedlock pregnancies resulting in more premature and sick babies; more homicides and assault injuries and more accidents, especially among the young. These behaviors, linked with such social pathologies as the breakdown of the family, chronic unemployment, homelessness, violence, and despair, cause Americans to end up in overwhelming numbers in the emergency rooms, intensive-care units, and morgues of our hospitals.

Americans also tend to "medicalize" many social problems. This occurs when a behavior that was once considered socially deviant is redefined as an "illness," treated by the health-care system, and paid for with health-care dollars. . . .

The costs of all this are high, amounting to about one-third of our health-care budget of one trillion dollars. . . . If we could eliminate these problems, our health-care costs would be comparable to those of most industrialized nations. . . .

LEROY L. SCHWARTZ, M.D.
Princeton, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The Medical Savings Accounts (Medisave) proposed by David Frum are based on perfectly sound actuarial principles. Putting away small amounts of money over one's working lifetime is cheaper and fairer than taxing the next generation for one's health care.

The challenge is that if savings accounts are voluntary, some will put away far more than others and some will put away nothing at all. It is easy to imagine a healthy senior government employee accumulating $200,000 or more, while a chronically ill employee drains his account every year, and a part-time or temporary employee may never even have an account. Employees who belong to HMO's rarely even see a medical bill, may think them barbaric, and surely have no incentive to save for them.

At retirement, those who have no account will be as dependent as ever on Medicare, and, on average, they may be less healthy, too, so federal costs would not go down at all. . . .

Republicans were perhaps a bit too gleeful at the defeat of Clinton's employer mandate. Someone, somewhere, has to be mandated to finance our ever-lengthening life spans. Without unions and without lifetime employment, it is difficult for me to imagine that most individuals will succeed in a 30- or 40-year savings program. There is precious little evidence in the history of IRA's and 401(k)'s to suggest that rank-and-file employees can retire in dignity without massive employer contributions.

I note with interest that a recent proposal to use savings accounts in Medicare called for "each senior citizen" to receive about $2,000 a year for his individual fund. Not "each senior who had a full-time job," or "each senior who qualified for a tax credit," but "each senior." Likewise, in school-voucher plans "each parent" gets a subsidy of $3,600 or whatever for the school of his choice, not "each parent with a generous employer." The production of a public service is made more libertarian, but the financing remains extremely democratic. The same should apply to medical-savings accounts. . . .

Is this coercion? Of course! But we either coerce people to save now, and thereby reap the benefits of compound interest and a national-investment pool; or we coerce people to pay taxes later, with no national benefits. . . .

BOB HERTZ
Universal Health Care Review
Willow River, Minnesota

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

David Frum does not address two important obstacles to appropriate health-care reform which the current system essentially mandates. First, people commonly lose coverage when they changes jobs or move. Second, people with pre-existing conditions are denied coverage for these conditions. Denials range from a few months for relatively minor problems to permanent exclusion for cancer and other diseases.

How will a person with a newly opened Medisave account of the kind Mr. Frum advocates, to which both employer and employee contribute and out of which employees would pay for their medical expenses, deal with the financial impact of an immediate catastrophic illness? And how will we as a nation respond to the needs of people who do not provide for their own needs?

GERRY MANDELL
Ashland, Oregon

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . David Frum mentions . . . the importance of preserving medical quality, but he does not specify how this goal can be achieved. Oddly enough, the direction private-sector reforms are taking with respect to medical quality parallels that which the resoundingly unpopular Clinton plan would have taken had it been enacted. The essence of these sweeping cost-containment measures is "substitution," which means providing cheaper care instead of "state-of-the-art" quality care. Our health-care plans, both private and (increasingly) public are single-mindedly allowing or mandating such substitutions with little or no supporting scientific or clinical evidence of their effectiveness. They "switch" medical care for surgical care; outpatient care for inpatient care (although for most conditions we already have the shortest hospitals stays of almost any other advanced country); self-diagnosis instead of mammography for women up to age fifty. There has been a 25-percent drop in the number of MRI's performed, and many hospitals are sending new mothers and their babies home only 24 hours after delivery. . . .

What can be done to improve the situation? Many of Mr. Frum's ideas should be tried, but other changes ought to be introduced as well to restructure the ground rules of the health-insurance market and remove market distortions. These involve four areas:

• Taxation: the tax treatment of health insurance must be rearranged to give the patient ownership of his policy and thus ensure

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portability, and reinforce the patient's control over his resources. All insured parties, not just those insured through an employer or those with a Medisave policy, should get a tax credit or exemption capped at the value of the average policy.

• Patient-centered reimbursement: put the patient back in the system by requiring all insurers to pay claims directly to the patient and not to the provider. . . .

• The patient's right to know: protect this at each encounter with the health-care system, from the purchase of insurance to consenting to major surgery. The patient must be able to ask and find out what medical services or products relevant to his condition are excluded from reimbursement under his plan. . . .

• Demand reduction: the toughest problem of all to come to grips with is the level of America's social pathology. America's social problems must be addressed at all different levels of society (families, communities, schools, religious institutions) if the demands that they place on the health-care system are to be reduced . . .

MARK W. STANTON
Health Policy International
Princeton, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As David Frum points out, health insurance for most Americans "is not insurance but a disguised form of salary"; it has become a perk. Instead of general health coverage, one now expects a policy to cover "eyeglasses, check-ups, and other routine expenses." But this cannot go on forever.

Another reason we have arrived at a crossroads is that the two-party insurance system has expanded to three: the insured now receives a service from a third party instead of cash from the insurer; the third party now gets the cash. The consequences of this arrangement should not have been hard to predict. First, the insurer has a huge cash inflow from nearly everyone in the country (mostly out of fear and sometimes sheer terror of getting sick). Secondly, instead of paying out claims to the insured in cash, the insurance companies pay a third party—the doctors. Now, the doctors do what they do on a full-time basis, while the person paying for all this becomes ill part-time. So, thirdly, since there is a huge amount of money floating around in the system, the doctors, acting according to accepted free-market practices, base their charges on that sum of money and not on an individual's ability to pay. Throw in the government, as Mr. Frum so aptly explains, and we have a superstructure consisting of a quagmire of bills and regulations plus billions of dollars. . . .

What ought to be done is . . . to start all over again. . . . and get the government entirely out of it. . . .

EDDIE MACCAUSLAND
Ocala, Florida

DAVID FRUM writes:

Leroy L. Schwartz complains of the deficiencies of HMO's. Personally, I sympathize with him: I would not join one. But a competitive market will naturally tend to offer both lower-cost, lower-service products and higher-cost, higher-service products: both Valujet and American Airlines. You pays your money and you takes your choice. The preference of doctors for working in a high-cost, high-service environment is under-

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standable, but the market almost always heeds the wishes of the parties paying the bill.

Bob Hertz astutely diagnoses Medisave's vulnerability to free-riders. How much of a problem this vulnerability presents will depend, however, on how generous a backstop society offers those free-riders. If we collectively insist that the nonindigent will be expected to provide for their own old age—and that those who do not will be treated as indigents—we may find Americans rediscovering the virtues of responsibility after all. And without state compulsion.

Gerry Mandell asks how a person with a Medisave account will meet the expenses of a catastrophic illness. Remember: the account works in tandem with a high-deductible (say $3,000) catastrophic-insurance policy. Any illness that gives rise to expenses greater than $3,000 would be met by insurance. But because the first $3,000 of medical expenses each year are paid out of the insured's own pocket with tax-sheltered money, the cost of catastrophic insurance would fall far below its present exorbitant rate.

Women's Studies

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

We must disagree with Carol Iannone's article, "What Moderate Feminists?" [June], on two grounds. First of all, she suggests that our book, *Professing Feminism: Cautionary Tales from the Strange World of Women's Studies*, assumes that there was a golden age of feminism that then turned to lead. But our book (which focuses strictly on feminism in the academy) makes the opposite argument: that the problems evident in women's-studies programs are the inevitable result of the effort to use the university as a political staging ground. We say that this commitment, which is in constant tension with the goals of a liberal education, was present from the start, and it is this, and its results, that we criticize.

But we must also take issue with Miss Iannone's use of Betty Friedan's admittedly hyperbolic rhetoric to blast all of feminism. Every political movement engages in excesses—but few complex movements are judged entirely by those excesses, as Miss Iannone has chosen to do here. Readers may not know from her representation of

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our book that we believe feminism has made important contributions in both scholarship and educational reform. We even believe there are good women's-studies teachers responsibly doing their jobs (despite pressures from women's studies not to do so). We say as much in our book.

We do not want to do what we criticize some feminists for doing to the "white-male-patriarchal" past: throw out the baby with the bath water. The point of criticizing feminism ought not to be enacting a desire to return to some supposedly pristine pre-feminist past in which women were not uppity, or to a mythical past in which they were always equal. It should be to hold feminism to high standards of thought and action, which alone are capable of leading to both good education and a better future.

DAPHNE PATAI
NORETTA KOERTGE
University of Massachusetts
Amherst, Massachusetts

CAROL IANNONE writes:

In their book, Daphne Patai and Noretta Koertge mention having been cautioned not to rehearse their quarrel with academic feminism publicly lest they give ammunition to conservative opponents, so my article must have seemed like one of their worst nightmares come true. Still, I must go even further in commending them for what they have done: the courage, honesty, specificity, and precision of their analysis of what the field of women's studies has for the most part become are truly admirable, especially for two professors who were involved in the enterprise themselves.

Nevertheless, let me respond to their objections to my article. They first say they did not claim that after an original "golden age," feminism in the academy deteriorated. But here is a sample of the kind of statement they make that would seem to indicate otherwise:

> [F]eminism, which began its career as an enormous opening out into the world, an expansion—and in many cases, a correction—of existing knowledge and perspectives, has ended up leading to a narrow, blinkered approach. Much of the original feminist work on gender was excellent, but when social constructionism turns doctrinaire, it ceases to be a useful thinking tool and becomes one more intellectual straitjacket to be cast off.

You deserve a factual look at...

Jerusalem (2)

Should the U.S. Embassy be moved to the capital of Israel?

In a previous message we showed that before the Six-Day War in 1967, the claim that Jerusalem was a Moslem/Arab city had seldom been asserted and that it had come about only in modern times. The status of Jerusalem has now again become of interest, in connection with the ongoing peace process between Israel and the Palestinians and with the effort, supported by 93 senators, to move the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

What are the facts?

Jerusalem—reunited and indivisible. Before the Six-Day War in 1967 Jerusalem was divided, the Jordanians having occupied the eastern part of the city. During their 19-year reign, all Jewish residents were driven out, all Jewish places of worship closed or destroyed, and Jewish cemeteries desecrated. The various Christian denominations, with important churches and sacred places in Jerusalem, were hampered in their activities and operated under the strict control of Moslem authorities.

With the liberation of all of Jerusalem by the Israel Defense Forces after Israel's victory in the 1967 Six-Day War and with the reunification of the city, Jerusalem truly became free and open. Just as the whole world rejoiced when the ugly wall dividing Berlin was torn down and the city reunited, so do we rejoice that the wall, the barbed wire and the machine gun emplacements have been torn down in Jerusalem.

"The question of the status of Jerusalem goes to the heart of the Arab-Israel conflict. To deny the status of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel questions the legitimacy of the state."

U.S. Embassy not in Israel's Capital. While the Palestinians lay claim to the eastern part of Jerusalem, not even the Arabs themselves question that the western part of the city is Israeli. It is remarkable therefore that the United States has steadfastly insisted on placing and keeping its embassy in Tel Aviv, instead of in Jerusalem, Israel's capital and the seat of all government offices. It is as if a government accredited to the United States were to insist on keeping its embassy in, say, New York or Chicago, rather than in Washington, D.C.

With the U.S. in the lead, all other countries, with the sole exceptions of Costa Rica and El Salvador, have also located their embassies in Tel Aviv, rather than in Jerusalem. It is a bizarre situation; because no government business is conducted in Tel Aviv. The U. S. maintains diplomatic relations with over 150 countries. In all of them, the U.S. Embassy is located in the city that the particular government designates as its capital. The only exception is Israel where, so far, our government has insisted on locating its embassy in a city other than the capital.

Congress in favor of moving Embassy to Jerusalem. Despite the fact that, prior to their election, both President Clinton and Vice President Gore, assured the public that the U.S. Embassy would be moved to Israel's capital, the Administration has until now blocked all moves in that direction, declaring that it would jeopardize the so-called "final status" talks on Jerusalem.

Leaders of Congress—both Republicans and Democrats—have introduced legislation by which the U.S. Embassy would have to be moved to Jerusalem. That legislation has been endorsed by 93 senators. It is to be expected therefore that, before too long, reality will prevail and that the U.S. Embassy will indeed be located in Jerusalem—the capital of Israel, one of our closest allies.

The reason given for not moving the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem is that it might violate "Arab sensitivities". While there would be some posturing, none of the Arab states could afford to do much else. Egypt would not refuse its yearly multi-billion dollar subsidy from Washington. King Hussein of Jordan would not jeopardize the lifeline that the U.S. has extended to him. Even the PLO would soon return to the negotiating table. The question of the status of Jerusalem goes to the heart of the Arab-Israel conflict. To deny the status of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel questions the legitimacy of the state. The move of the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem will signal Yassir Arafat once and for all that he will not get U.S. and world support for the division of Jerusalem and for the establishment—in any part of it—as the capital of a new Arab state.

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Moreover, while on the surface they are right that their book locates the source of the trouble in the attempt by feminist professors to make "women's studies serve a political agenda," they do seem to accept the idea that there is a "good" way to be political. For example, they declare that "the mere fact that women's studies has an explicit political aim does not by itself mean that women's-studies education need take the form it does." And they suggest that there can be a "healthy balance" between academics and activism, and offer the following example of a "feminist political initiative" that they find "arguably . . . appropriate":

> [A] professor might give her textbook order to the local feminist bookstore, thus offering financial support to a woman-owned business while also ensuring that her students are exposed to the novels, T-shirts, records, buttons, and periodicals of feminist popular culture.

But if they were to imagine an evangelical Christian or an Orthodox Jewish professor doing something analogous, I think they might consider such an initiative not at all appropriate.

To me, all this shows that even the most insightful critics of feminist excesses often cannot detach themselves from the root thinking that led to those excesses.

This leads me to Professors Patai and Koertge's second point, namely, that I judge the movement only by its excesses. In fact, rhetorical excess is part and parcel of the feminist project and cannot be lightly dismissed. I would also remind them that their work, too, has been criticized for focusing on the extremes and not being fair to women's studies as a whole.

Sex in America

To The Editor of Commentary:

In "Sex Among the Americans" [June], Joseph Adelson claims that sociologists who interviewed a sample of Americans about their sex lives used "several methods of checking the veracity of [their] responses. . . ."

Mr. Adelson would have done us a service if he had described these methods and their results. A large body of research tells us to take with a skeptical grain of salt what people tell strangers about such matters as their ages, incomes, occupations, ethnicity, voting behavior, criminal activity, etc. Even husbands and wives tell different stories when asked about their intimate lives. For example, a study of married couples in Toronto finds that they seldom agree about "who gets his/her way in a dispute" . . . or whether "lack of privacy ever prevented intercourse." . . . They concur only moderately about the number of hours they spent together *the day before* the interview . . . and how frequently they fight. And their reports of the frequency of sexual intercourse during the four weeks preceding the interview also agree only modestly.

Given such unreliability, can one believe the sex researchers' "finding" that 45 percent of men between the ages of 80 and 84 have "sex partners"? At least one sociologist interpreted this "datum" as "interesting and cheering, . . . even if the aged have confused fantasy with fact."

Mr. Adelson is aware that much social research, as well as the U.S. census, depends on self-reporting, and he concludes by asking what else we can do. I offer two initial suggestions: (1) stop referring to studies of social events as "scientific" and their practitioners as "scientists," and (2) use individuals' answers to questions about themselves only when their reliability can be assessed, and their validity checked by independent measures.

Gwynne Nettler
San Diego, California

Joseph Adelson writes:

I do not see the point of Gwynne Nettler's letter since it repeats what my article said: that self-reporting is fallible and must be employed prudently. It also said that sexuality is only one of many topics where shame or wounded narcissism or whatever may contaminate what is reported. Obviously, objective measures are to be preferred in most cases, but here as elsewhere the best can be the enemy of the good. Certain problems simply cannot be approached without some use of self-reporting. A student of eating disorders might identify anorexics by weighing them, but, there being no tell-tale signs in most cases, how will he locate bulimics except by inquiry?

Abandoning self-reporting would cripple social research in other ways as well. Imagine the following scene:

Researcher: I want to thank you for taking part in the truly scientific study we're doing. Let me begin by asking your marital status.

Subject: I'm married, and have been for about ten years.

Researcher: Do you have any proof of that?

Subject: You can see my wedding ring.

Researcher: Anybody can buy a wedding ring to wear. Do you have genuinely independent evidence, say a wedding certificate, or some official document?

Subject: Of course I have, but I don't carry it around. Why don't you believe me? Why would I lie to you?

Researcher: No offense meant, but we true scientists have learned that many people don't report accurately. Not that they lie, exactly, but what they tell you is not to be taken on faith. Speaking of faith, let's go on to the next question. Could you tell me your religion?

Subject: Protestant. Lutheran, to be precise.

Researcher: Could you show me a baptismal certificate?

Subject: What?!

Researcher: Don't get upset. A letter from your minister will do just as well. . . .

Etcetera.

A final comment: I note that Mr. Nettler does not question the sociologist who is skeptical of the sexual capacity of eighty-year-olds. They are living in a dream world, just kidding themselves, or kidding others. Perhaps so, but how does the sociologist know? Does he have video cameras in a randomly selected group of bedrooms?

McNamara & Vietnam

To The Editor of Commentary:

Gabriel Schoenfeld's review of Robert S. McNamara's *In Retrospect* [Books in Review, June] deserves praise and an expression of gratitude from those of us who saw in most reviews of the book yet another extension of "received opinion" on the Vietnam war.

Mr. Schoenfeld's piece should be required reading for all the young victims of "tenured dishonesty" in academia. It should also be brought to the attention of veterans' organizations; they should know that someone still honors sacrifices made in a just cause and has the skill and courage to present a comprehensive defense of their case.

Where else but in Commentary could this "history as it really was" be found? The magazine's delivery

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every month is like the arrival of the U.S. cavalry in old Western cliffhangers. . . .

DANIEL M. CRABB
El Centro, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I found Gabriel Schoenfeld's superb review of *In Retrospect* the most helpful of all the reviews I read. . . . He presents the facts, analyzes McNamara's decision-making process at key points, and tells why it failed and why McNamara and many others who initially supported the U.S. effort later changed their minds. Finally, Mr. Schoenfeld provides significant insights to help us evaluate the thinking and behavior of those Americans who believed at the outset, and still do, that the United States was correct in deciding to defend South Vietnam's independence. . . .

HERMAN M. STURM
Silver Spring, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Whether or not we should have fought the war in Vietnam, it is clear that we did so in a manner that could not achieve victory. Of course, our effort was micromanaged by Lyndon Johnson, Robert S. McNamara, and other civilians. But does the fact that the war was fought badly because of decisions made by our political leaders justify the conduct of Bill Clinton and other "avoiders," as my liberal friends call those who evaded the draft? . . . Clinton cannot be vindicated for his decision to "avoid" the draft because of McNamara's admission of mistakes more than 30 years after the fact. . . .

When it comes to those who gave aid and comfort to Hanoi, Jane Fonda should certainly be front and center. She voiced the same opinions as Grace Paley (whom Mr. Schoenfeld cites) about the treatment accorded American prisoners of war. Fonda's fame gave her opinions an exalted status. To my knowledge, she has never admitted that she was wrong. . . .

PHILIP J. SCHILLER
Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Reviewers and others commenting on Robert S. McNamara's book on Vietnam all seem to agree that he harbored doubts and misgivings as early as 1965. I do not believe he did.

As the military reporter for the Associated Press based at the Pentagon, I observed McNamara closely throughout his seven-year tenure as Secretary of Defense. . . . More importantly, I took part in weekly background sessions where reporters and McNamara engaged in freewheeling discussion; he also dined from time to time with small groups of reporters. In such background settings, McNamara knew he could speak freely because the ground rules forbade reporters from quoting him directly.

Never, until the war was more than five years old, did I detect any signs that McNamara was under stress. Until well into 1967—only months before he was eased out—McNamara exuded confidence. He was quick to show irritation during those years whenever his war policies or strategic assumptions were questioned by reporters or others.

I am prepared to believe that McNamara had become discouraged by mid-1967—but only because all the assumptions on which he and his "whiz-kid" disciples had based their war strategy had failed. Thus, in my view, McNamara was suffering from a badly bruised ego. Remember, this was the man who had been hailed as a kind of superchief, a master manager and driving intellect. This was a Cabinet officer who could dominate congressional hearings and quell criticisms with a torrent of alleged facts.

I do not think for a minute that McNamara was overwhelmed by remorse for the poor "grunts" he sent to Southeast Asia. If he had misgivings as early as 1965, when we were just getting deeply involved in the ground fighting, why did he persist in a war that cost thousands of additional lives?

Yes, President Johnson bears ultimate responsibility for the debacle. But he largely relied on the advice of Robert McNamara, who was for a long time the towering figure in the Johnson administration. Vietnam was truly "McNamara's war."

FRED S. HOFFMAN
Alexandria, Virginia

Samuel Lipman

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I would like to draw readers' attention to the release of *Jan DeGaetani in Concert, Volume Three* (Bridge BCD-9048), a compact disc which contains a previously unissued performance of Dmitri Shostakovich's 1948 song cycle, "From Jewish Folk Poetry," op. 79. This performance, recorded in 1980 at the Aspen Music Festival, is sung by Benita Valente, Jan DeGaetani, and Jon Humphrey, and accompanied by the late Samuel Lipman, who in additon to being COMMENTARY's music critic was also a pianist of great distinction and insight. This is one of the few recordings of his playing currently available.

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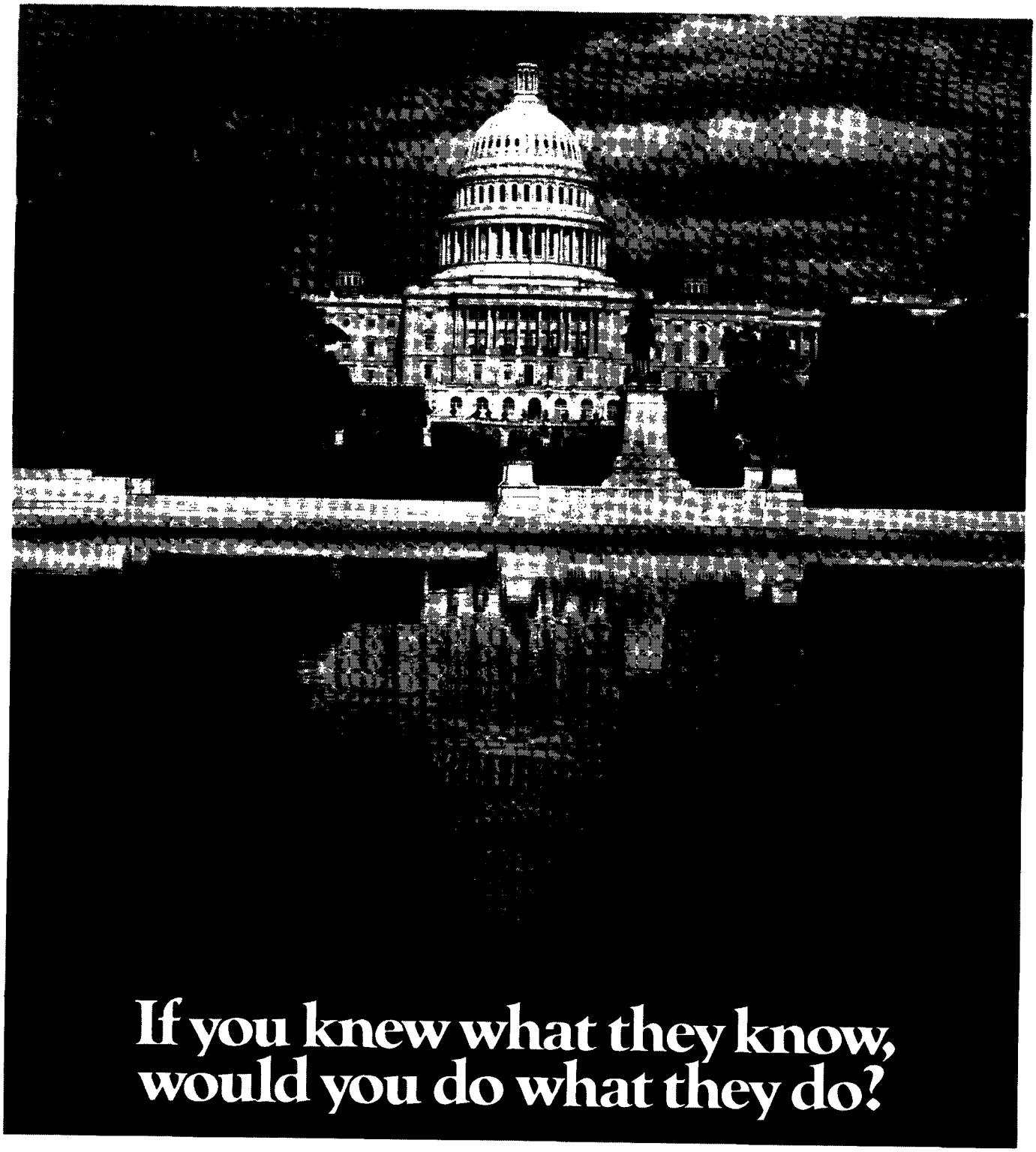

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Deterring China

Arthur Waldron

OVER the course of this summer, American-Chinese relations passed, not for the first time, from (relative) calm to crisis to (relative) calm again. By early September, the People's Republic of China (PRC) had apparently ended a series of missile tests that were intended to intimidate Taiwan, and had uttered some soothing words about its new military installations near the Philippines. Harry Wu, the human-rights activist, had been returned to the United States. Despite much commotion over Chinese manners, Hillary Clinton had indeed led the American delegation to the United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing. And, most importantly, there was talk of an early summit meeting between Bill Clinton and the Chinese president, Jiang Zemin. For the moment, things seemed to be returning to normal.

But whether the immediate crisis recedes or not, the problems it exposed are no closer to solution; indeed, they are steadily worsening, and dealing with them will require more than atmospherics, improved diplomacy, and a summit meeting, or even two. In particular, American policy toward China remains frozen in a two-decades-old model that is increasingly irrelevant to the situation of today, and may become dangerously so in the future.

CONVENTIONAL American thinking about China, both official and unofficial, runs along the following lines. China, whether we like it or not, is the next great power, destined to dominate Asia. And it is a particular kind of power—one that, in the words of an op-ed piece by Walter Russell Mead of the World Policy Institute that appeared in the *New York Times* at the height of the summer crisis, is only now "emerging from two centuries of weakness and humiliation." Having finally mastered "Western technologies and economic ideas, [many Chinese] feel," Mead continued, "that at long last they are in a position to command the respect and consideration they deserve." And that they deserve such respect is undeniable, for if their country "stays united and continues to grow, it will indisputably become the leader of its region."

Of course, there is concern in American policy circles about China's domestic political situation: everyone agrees that a "succession struggle" is in the offing. But though this may be unsettling, no truly fundamental change is anticipated. After the dust settles, it is thought, a new Chinese leader or group of leaders, comparable in function to Deng Xiaoping, can be expected to take the helm and steer China forward.

It is very important (the conventional analysis continues), not only for China but for Asia as a whole, that this happen smoothly. And that is why American-Chinese cooperation is crucial. "Stability in Asia," writes Henry Kissinger, who in the 1970's was perhaps the principal architect of our still-current policy, "is most likely if both China and the United States participate in shaping Asia's future." Fortunately, shared interests point both countries in the right direction:

> For the next decade at least, America and China have a parallel interest in equilibrium in Asia. China wants the United States to help balance its relationships with powerful neighbors—Japan, Russia, and India—at least until it is strong enough to do so on its own. America needs Chinese cooperation on these matters as well as on the peaceful evolution of the future of Taiwan, on nuclear proliferation, and on the transfer of weapons technology.

Precisely because China is so concerned about "respect and consideration," substantial American bending may be called for in this view; when things go awry, as they periodically do, we must be willing to investigate missteps in Washington at least as much as in Beijing.* The watchword in such cases is dialogue; looking back on early successes, Winston Lord, a Kissinger protégé who now serves in the Clinton administration as Assis

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*In this summer's crisis, China was not held entirely guiltless, to be sure—Beijing would have to learn, Mead scolded in passing in his op-ed piece, that "power doesn't flow from the barrel of the gun"—but he still placed the real fault in a whole series of American actions: "[E]verywhere China looks, America gets in its face. The United States welcomes the Dalai Lama and the President of Taiwan. It buries the hatchet with Hanoi . . . it stiffens the spine of the Southeast Asian countries in their disputes with China over the ownership of the potentially oil-rich Spratly islands."

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tant Secretary of State for East Asia, has stressed the efficacy of "higher-level meetings, more frequent meetings and negotiations, and mutual visits, including military contacts." Particularly to be shunned is anything smacking of "containment."

AN EMERGING Chinese superpower, touchy about its status but politically stable and sharing interests with the United States; a process of engagement and discussion that can gradually overcome cultural differences and misunderstandings; a partnership in managing an ever-more-prosperous Asia: that is the assessment—or perhaps the aspiration—that guides our China policy. Does it answer to present-day conditions?

Perhaps most basic to the Nixon-Kissinger approach of the 1970's was the assumption of Chinese political stability; on this was predicated, in turn, the belief that China *could* participate in the international system of states in a steady and reliable way. At the time, this assumption was in fact justified, for Communist authority was then still intact: Mao Zedong still had four years to live when he met Nixon, and the slightly younger leadership pool from which Deng Xiaoping would later emerge was vigorous. In addition, the Soviet threat from the north restrained Beijing's actions elsewhere in Asia, even while pushing China toward the United States.

Today, however, the situation has changed dramatically. The cold war has ended, and with it the external imperative for Sino-American rapprochement. At home, the leadership has run out of cadres of the stature of a Mao or a Deng. Even more importantly, vast social and political shifts are under way. The opening to the West—the great and lasting achievement of the older policy approach—unleashed a dialectical process in China, and this process has begun to undermine the foundations on which the initial diplomatic relationship rested.

Despite repeated attempts to establish constitutions and create parliaments, 20th-century China has always been a government of men, never of laws. China's only political system has been a hierarchy, based ultimately on force, fear, and the authority of individuals. In the People's Republic, those individuals up until now have been the Communist-party elders, and above all the veterans of the Long March (1934-35) who over decades of alternately working with and struggling against one another coalesced into a relatively stable center of power.

Whenever the hierarchy falls apart, however—as it did most notoriously in the warlord era of the 1910's and 1920's, and is once again doing today—China's political future comes essentially up for grabs. Institutional structures exist, but they count for little. What has counted most until recently is that Deng Xiaoping was widely if not indeed universally feared; his likely successors are not. In short, the country is entering a period not merely of succession struggle but of regime struggle.

How this will play out is very difficult to predict. According to the old conventional wisdom, the Communist party will maintain enough cohesion and control to stay in power. A newer conventional wisdom is beginning to project other authoritarian possibilities: a military regime, for example, or a shift by the Communist rulers from socialist orthodoxy to assertive nationalism. And there are sunnier scenarios as well, which take into consideration China's economic and social dynamism. Thus, one can point to the fact that the authority of China's central government is diminishing, not increasing; that the regions are becoming more self-sufficient and self-confident; that social and political ferment continues; that Tiananmen is not forgotten; and that many in the Chinese elite—including members of the government bureaucracy—have ideas for a more liberal and constitutional path forward.

Whatever that path will be, however, the problem lies in making the transition. It is an enormous problem, so enormous that it raises the prospect of an earthquake in China comparable in scale and scope to the one that shook and toppled the regimes of the Eastern bloc just a few years ago. American opinion tends largely to discount this threatening possibility—indeed, the conventional wisdom rules it out. But the Chinese government is certainly aware of it, and rhetorically at least has sworn mighty oaths that China will not follow the Soviet path.

Perhaps a better way to think of the present moment in China is through a parallel not with the Soviet Union of the 1980's but with Wilhelmine Germany. This was a powerful state and a new arrival in the European balance of power. Like China today, it featured an authoritarian government pitted against a dynamic society, and again like Beijing, it wanted its place in the sun. For three decades, the emergence of this new power was skillfully managed by Bismarck in a way that largely reassured neighbors and avoided all-out war. But after Bismarck's departure, the various interest groups in Germany competed in setting the country's direction, which culminated in the series of crises that brought on World War I. When the war was lost, the social forces that had long been suppressed made themselves felt in turn, in chaotic—and unexpected—developments that led to the Third Reich.

The parallel is not perfect, and China is not Germany, but it is undeniable that such Bismarcks as China has produced—Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping among them—have left or are about to leave the scene. How long the gendarmerie can control the streets is an open question.

FOR the moment, at any rate, the gendarmerie is exerting itself strenuously. There has been a palpable attempt to tighten up at home: the Ministry of Public Secu-

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rity and the People's Armed Police have greatly increased their surveillance capacities and beefed up their arsenals (though their effectiveness and loyalty remain questionable). In Tibet, Beijing seems as determined as ever to crush the independence movement; and in Hong Kong, presumably to become the showplace of China's ability to manage an open society, preparations have been made to dissolve the popularly elected legislative council and replace it with a body named by the PRC just as soon as the British depart in 1997. Throughout China, dissidents have been rounded up and added to the already untold numbers of anonymous political prisoners; and a hard-line tone has taken over official pronouncements. Afraid of its own people, the Chinese government appears to have calculated that what works is more and more repression.

Nor is the hard line limited to domestic use. Perhaps its most worrying manifestation has been China's increased military spending and new willingness to use or threaten force against its neighbors—a development which has caught the Clinton administration by surprise.

One should not overstate what is happening. Much media attention has been devoted to China's acquisition of new weapons—Su-27 aircraft from Russia, for example, or the F-10, apparently an advanced fighter being constructed by Israel. If China were in fact to replace its *entire* current stock of obsolete MiG-derived aircraft with either of these, military balances in Asia would be rocked to the foundations. But it is doubtful that China can afford simply to purchase foreign war planes in such numbers, let alone provide the logistical infrastructure necessary to support them.

All in all, then, it is likely, as a recent RAND study concluded, that China's air force will not be completely overhauled, and that it will be even more obsolete in ten years than it is now. The same is true in other conventional military areas, where advanced systems are being incorporated into larger structures which cannot support them, and which they alone cannot transform. The exception is in the area of nuclear weapons and missiles; there, by dint of steady application of talent and vast resources over decades, China has created a formidable capability.

But even if in conventional military means China is still comparatively weak, weakness is no guarantee of peaceful behavior: history is full of examples of states that attacked long before they were "ready." The fact that China's real capabilities in its immediate theater are probably lower than Taiwan's, for example, has not prevented attempts to intimidate Taiwan, of a sort that could accidentally lead to a real military incident that might slide out of control.

Not long ago, the Chinese made military modernization the last of their "four modernizations." But thanks to the political struggle, this has now become a technical priority, and irredentist goals are riding higher. If this continues, the face of Asia will assume a very different aspect from the peaceful region of prosperous trading states that is imagined by American policy-makers.

Certainly a new *tone* has been detectable for at least a year, and in more than one case, so are actions to match. Thus, in October 1994, after the U.S. pursued back to its base a Chinese nuclear submarine that had been trailing the U.S. carrier *Kitty Hawk* in international waters, China warned that next time it would "shoot to kill." The incident hit the headlines for a day or two, and was then shrugged off.

Next, in February 1995, came the discovery by Manila of a secretly constructed Chinese naval facility on the disputed Mischief Reef in the Spratly islands, within the Philippines' 200-mile territorial zone. The facility comprised several concrete structures on stilts, satellite dishes, anti-aircraft artillery, conspicuous national flags, and an anchorage where Chinese frigates were regularly found. The Filipinos were stunned—they have no modern military to speak of, and thought they were China's friends—and the shock waves reverberated across Asia.

Then in April, India expressed official alarm at China's rapid armament program. India has, of course, always been concerned about China; its stance has characteristically combined rhetoric about friendship-between-peoples with a policy of military modernization that clearly has China in mind. Lately, New Delhi has been worried by the fact that the PRC is supplying ballistic missiles and possibly nuclear technology to Pakistan, as well as by the increasingly close connection between China and Burma which apparently will allow China to construct naval and intelligence-gathering facilities a short distance from Indian bases in the Andaman Islands.

In July, to round out this litany, China began the first of a series of military exercises and missile firings close to Taiwan and clearly designed to pressure and intimidate the islanders—indeed, explicitly intended to force from office President Lee Teng-hui, who otherwise appears set to become the first popularly elected head of state in the history of Chinese civilization.

THESE events mark a turning point, a moment when the good will that has so far been extended to China by its immediate neighbors has begun to dissipate, and the long-term confidence that has underwritten massive foreign investment has begun to waver; a moment when regional arms races, already far from trivial, have gathered momentum, and when an informal anti-Chinese coalition has started to take shape. In retrospect, it may also turn out to have been a moment—like the Rhineland crisis in the 1930's—when a much larger crisis, one whose form has not yet emerged, could have been headed off at low cost.

Yet how did the United States respond as these

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events were unfolding? Bill Clinton, let us recall, came into office having promised to deal forthrightly with the "butchers of Beijing." In 1994 his bluff was called by the Chinese in the debacle over most-favored-nation status, and the administration eventually retreated in disarray; its much-touted new emphasis on human rights was "delinked" from general policy. We may now be witnessing an analogous process in security matters. Here, however, even strong rhetoric has been avoided from the outset, and strong deeds all the more so.

Concerning the Spratlys, the State Department announced on February 12 that "Our position is that we don't take a position on the merit of competing claims in the South China sea." Rather than suggesting a willingness to act, or to support our Filipino allies, we declared that "we see no justification for any threat or use of military force, and . . . we would view the use or threat of force as a very serious matter." (But what was the building of naval installations on Mischief Reef if not a "use of force"?)

Everywhere, the American stress was on the need for quiet diplomacy and peaceful engagement. Traveling in Asia, former Defense Secretary Richard Cheney evidently reflected official thinking in his carefully chosen words:

> My impression is that the Chinese have legitimate security requirements any nation of that size would. . . . I think I share the hopes of just about everybody that ultimately those disputes [like the Spratlys] will be resolved by peaceful means and that no one will resort to military force to resolve their differences.

Admiral Richard Macke, CINCPAC, took a similar view:

> What we have to do is make China one of our friends. We can't confront them, we can't isolate them. We don't need a security treaty or anything like that with China. We just need to work with them, to stay engaged in a dialogue.

Much the same held true in connection with the maneuvers and missile firings off Taiwan. American statements of any kind were in fact rare, perhaps out of hope that if we were quiet, the Chinese might shift course without our prompting. It was almost as if we considered it in bad taste to mention what had triggered the crisis—namely, in the words of the Japanese newspaper *Sankei Shimbun*, "China's recent expansionary strategy toward the south." As for the missiles, the U.S. State Department did acknowledge that the tests were "not conducive to peace and stability in the area of the Taiwan Strait," and there were assurances that U.S. obligations under the Taiwan Relations Act would be fulfilled. But the American fleet did not move an inch.

This whole sequence displayed very clearly the weaknesses of the current model of American foreign policy. According to that model, an insecure China acts when it is "provoked" by us. On Mischief Reef, however, the United States had done absolutely nothing to provoke China, unless one considers it a provocation to have reduced our naval presence in the region, and apparently reduced surveillance as well. Besides, if quiet diplomacy, engagement, and dialogue are such virtues, why, one might ask, did China itself not practice them? Instead, China's tactics were composed of the by-now familiar mixture of brute intimidation and diplomatic sweet reasonableness—a major trait, since ancient times, of Chinese conflict management. The United States, having been inattentive to begin with, then responded to the Spratly installations with perfect mildness, thereby making it all the less likely that they will be removed any time soon.

NOWHERE is the poverty of imagination in American policy clearer than in connection with Taiwan. The future of the island has, of course, been a vexed topic at least since the 1940's, when it was returned from 50 years of Japanese control to the Chinese government of Chiang Kai-shek. Is it part of the People's Republic of China? Is it a separate China in a divided state, like (in status) the former German Democratic Republic within Germany? Is it a distinct country, whose people, although mostly of (rather remote) mainland Chinese ancestry, have differentiated themselves over the centuries and become "Taiwanese"—rather as Englishmen have become Australians and New Zealanders and Americans?

The first is what the PRC insists. Its calculation seems to be that if Taiwan is internationally isolated and shorn of all official attributes, it will somehow be forced to join China on Beijing's terms. Only recently has the PRC begun to realize that in fact its policy is having the opposite effect: people in Taiwan have increasingly concluded that if the price of Chineseness is being part of the PRC, then better not to be Chinese at all.

Beijing, in other words, has unwittingly been fueling what it claims to fear most: Taiwanese independence. And such independence has in any case long since been awarded to the island by the international media: the language of "Nationalist" and "Communist" China belongs to another age, and even Taipei officials born in mainland China and speaking only Mandarin are referred to as "Taiwanese."

Nevertheless, our government's officially correct answer to the question of Taiwan's status is "none of the above." For American policy, Taiwan has no official definition at all—a reflection, perhaps, of the expectation in 1978 that it would conveniently disappear as an independent entity after the Carter administration broke with it diplomatically. Although the Taiwan government calls its state the Republic of China, we refer to the "people on Taiwan" and the "Taiwan authorities." Their president is simply Mr. Lee Teng-hui;

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the 1994-95 edition of the *World Factbook*, published by the CIA, though otherwise proceeding in alphabetical order, lists Taiwan after Zimbabwe, and for the category "long-form name" gives "none."

This is hardly to say that no provisions have been made for Taiwan. The Taiwan Relations Act, passed by Congress in 1979, provides for a wide range of "unofficial" and "informal" connections, handled by retired diplomatic and military officials operating through sham "private" organizations. But the great paradox of our current policy is that its weaknesses are the reverse of what is usually the case. Often we entertain political purposes or desires that cannot be or are not supported militarily—solving the crisis in former Yugoslavia by air-strikes alone, for example. In the case of Taiwan, by contrast, although we have no formal security relationship with the island, we have a clear military policy. What is lacking is a political and diplomatic counterpart.

Thus, over the years, the United States has sold to Taiwan military equipment that is essential to the island's self-defense. This has been done very responsibly, with care taken to avoid fueling an arms race. But military actions cannot be effective in a political vacuum, nor does hardware alone deter war. Unavoidably, the United States is being caught between the emerging democracy in Taiwan—surely a development we favor—and the prescriptions of our China policy, written while Chiang Kai-shek was still alive and in power.

We have, of course, a series of stock phrases that are indispensable diplomatically when the subject comes up. We recognize only "one China," we look for peace, and so forth. But these words are hardly real answers to the question of what exactly is to be the island's future. The pity is that the excluded middle—a "two-China policy" (which almost certainly could not be called that)—is in fact the best answer to the problem. Such a policy would rescue Taiwan from international pariahdom by giving it an official status, and one that officially conserved its Chineseness (as the name Taiwan alone does not); Taiwan officials would thereby be permitted to open embassies, visit foreign capitals, talk to their counterparts, join the UN, and so forth. Moreover, a Taiwan that was secure and sovereign, but clearly a "China," would almost certainly forge strong links with the mainland.

But this decent and realistic alternative has been pushed far to the margins of official American discourse, and the potential for conflict has grown apace. Beijing is encouraged to insist on "reunification" on its terms, which no elected politician in Taipei will agree to; attempts to impose such a result by force or threats of force—as in the recent PRC military maneuvers—risk ruinous war. In Taiwan, meanwhile, some have been calling for full-fledged independence, and if they should win outright control, one can imagine a Lithuania-style unilateral declaration in the teeth of pleas from the U.S. and others to desist. This would also lead almost certainly to a serious crisis: the PRC has long stated that it will use force against an independent Taiwan.

As for us, would we support a democratic Taiwan against any or all threats—or would we perform a sort of Munich, and attempt to browbeat Taipei into backing down? These profoundly bleak and all too possible choices are not even addressed by our present policy.

IN THE last months the states of Asia have collectively seen something that most had considered a remote possibility: a China on the warpath. That vision will not be forgotten, no matter how many other things are smoothed over. Regional military budgets and military calculations will not be the same again. India will press ahead with military modernization; the ASEAN states will grow even stronger; Taiwan—with a new sense of urgency—will bolster its already substantial military budget and seek even more modern weapons. Most importantly, Japan—which in Asia traditionally plays Germany to China's France—will reconsider its role.

From now on the Asian security situation will increasingly resemble that of interwar Europe: a society of strong nation-states, increasingly well-armed and in possession of conflicting visions of the future, living in the shadow of an erratic and sometimes menacing power. In that situation some Americans will continue to believe (exactly as their counterparts did in the 1920's) that booming trade is bound to resolve disagreements, while others will take refuge in periodically reciting old and once-brilliant policy formulations that have become habit. But the plain fact is that unless the United States begins to see things as they are, and to play an active role in deterring China and shaping Asian affairs, it will pay the eventual and possibly catastrophic price.

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Will Affirmative Action Survive?

Arch Puddington

ONLY a few months ago, it seemed to critics and supporters alike that federally mandated programs of race and gender preference were, if not doomed to total elimination, then in serious jeopardy.

Conservative Republicans, emboldened by their 1994 congressional landslide, had effectively ended a longstanding, bipartisan consensus that had prevented any full discussion of affirmative action at the level of national politics. Overt opposition to preferential policies was no longer limited to Senator Jesse Helms and a few like-minded colleagues. Instead, proposals to roll back preferences were being advanced by such mainstream figures as Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole and Governor Pete Wilson of California. In what looked like a harbinger of things to come, Republicans had succeeded in eliminating a set-aside program for the communications industry, and another set-aside was dropped by the Federal Communications Commission because of the threat of litigation by white-owned businesses.

And then there was the California Civil Rights Initiative. Conceived by two college professors, CCRI called for the elimination of state-enforced preferential policies based on race, ethnicity, or gender, including the de-facto admissions quotas in the California university system. The sponsors of CCRI had originally tried to get their measure adopted by the state legislature. When that failed, they announced plans to place the proposal on the 1996 ballot as a public referendum, thereby ensuring that affirmative action would dominate the debate not only in California but, given the state's crucial role in presidential elections, nationally as well. CCRI, in other words, sent elected officials a clear message that they no longer enjoyed the luxury of ignoring public discontent over America's ever-expanding tangle of race regulations.

Meanwhile, in stark contrast to the confidence and apparent unity of its critics, liberal and Democratic supporters of affirmative action seemed confused, divided, and intimidated by the unexpected challenge to an orthodoxy which they had supported for three decades. Even the Clinton administration had been placed on the defensive; early press reports indicated that the President was actually giving thought to a major reduction in affirmative-action initiatives.

CONSERVATIVE Republican ascendancy liberal Democratic disarray—these, combined with the public's consistent and overwhelming opposition to most federal racial policies, convinced many in the early months of 1995 that the era of racial preferences was coming to an end. It was, however, a naive expectation.

Affirmative action, after all, is a policy which has survived for years in the face of widespread, and often angry, disapproval. It is also a policy whose potential constituency is quite formidable, encompassing blacks, certain immigrant groups, and women—in other words, over half the population. True, many women, Hispanics, and Asians are ambivalent about or in some cases hostile to the idea of group rights, but black Americans retain a powerful attachment to the principle of affirmative action, and many in the new black middle class have come to look on it as an entitlement—much as the elderly view Medicare or farmers regard crop subsidies. Support for affirmative action also enjoys the status of a litmus test of group loyalty for black elected officials and civil-rights leaders.

Nor does affirmative action lack for broad backing among predominantly white institutions. The business community has regularly spoken out *against* anti-quota legislation in the past, and is distinctly unenthusiastic about anti-preference proposals today, including CCRI. Officials at prestigious universities regard their racially balanced student bodies as a major achievement. Even the American Bar Association, in an unusual move, passed a statement endorsing affirmative action. And, most importantly, on the national political scene, the critics of affirmative action are not as united in their purposes, and the supporters not as disunited, as they might seem.

REPUBLICANS, to begin with, have discovered predictably enough that racial policy is a more complex matter than, say, the Endangered Species

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Act. Part of their problem is the history of Republican complicity in establishing the current system of preferences. It was Richard Nixon who, as President, approved the first federal initiative—the so-called Philadelphia Plan—requiring contractors to institute goals and timetables for minority hiring as a precondition for obtaining federal contracts. Nixon also strengthened the enforcement powers of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and appointed to the Supreme Court several Justices whose decisions paved the way for the growth of preferential programs.

Until now, moreover, most prominent Republicans have deviated little from the Nixon pattern: voting for affirmative-action legislation while railing against reverse discrimination at election time. Thus, Republicans routinely approved the various programs which reserved a percentage of government contracts for minorities and women, and found excuses to vote against anti-quota bills introduced by arch-conservatives like Jesse Helms. Republicans were also instrumental in pushing the racial gerrymandering of congressional districts, a self-interested policy which, by increasing the concentration of black Democratic voters in certain Southern states, contributed (modestly) to the GOP's impressive recent gains in the region. The prominent role taken by Bob Dole and Pete Wilson in the anti-affirmative-action campaign is itself full of irony, since, as liberals never tire of pointing out, both have long records of support for preferences.

There is, to be sure, something hypocritical in the charge, advanced by Jesse Jackson and members of the Clinton administration, that Republican presidential candidates are now exploiting racial resentments and "politicizing" the race issue. On the contrary, it is the advocates of preference who for years thwarted open and sober debate on government race regulations, while those with reservations were smugly informed that their opinions amounted to a refined form of racism. Having been treated as pariahs or, at best, ignored, such critics might be excused for harboring the thought that politicizing the issue, or adopting unconventional tactics like CCRI, represents the only means of gaining the political world's attention.

Nevertheless, the prospect of a presidential campaign organized around a racial theme has already raised concern among some prominent Republicans, including William J. Bennett, House Speaker Newt Gingrich, and Jack Kemp. Gingrich has urged Republicans to postpone action while he puts together a distinctively conservative anti-poverty program emphasizing community development and private entrepreneurship. Kemp has gone farther, threatening to disavow any Republican presidential campaign which "separates people by race and by gender."

The apprehensions expressed by Gingrich and Kemp do not mean they have succumbed to pro-affirmative-action arguments. Unlike some Republicans, Gingrich has voted against preferences and "diversity" measures in the past. Kemp also spurns the notion of group rights; his programs for inner-city development emphasize capitalist enterprise, not government paternalism. And he has recently condemned preferences and reparations as "wrong in principle and ruinous in practice." What motivates both Kemp and Gingrich is something else: the conviction that Republicans can appeal to black voters who share the party's social conservatism on issues like family and crime. A polemical offensive on racial preferences, they believe, will interfere with this strategy to expand the Republican political base.

There are, as it happens, modest signs of Republican inroads in black America. But the roster of Republican black elected officials remains quite small—two members of the House of Representatives, a few state officials, a handful of state legislators—and black support for Republican presidential candidates is still stuck in the single-digit range. Since the Republicans are now clearly identified as an anti-preference party, it is inconceivable that black voters who regard affirmative action as a touchstone issue will be swayed by empowerment proposals and enterprise zones. Nor does Gingrich's plan for black economic advancement inspire a great deal of confidence; anti-poverty initiatives have a sorry history, and today's search for a conservative anti-poverty blueprint seems as chimerical as yesterday's search for a liberal one.

There are more fundamental problems as well: Republican ignorance of American racial history, lack of interest in the complexities of the racial debate, unfamiliarity with the condition of the black poor, and nervousness over being labeled the party of bigotry. For many Republicans, and particularly for many of the new generation of conservatives, race is alien terrain. In general they are more comfortable proposing an overhaul of environmental regulation, assailing the arts and humanities agencies, or criticizing the tax structure than taking on the reform of the country's diversity regulations. Worse, they demonstrate little grasp of the far-reaching damage suffered by schools, universities, the political system, and other crucial institutions as a consequence of the liberal agenda on race. This makes them particularly inept at explaining why affirmative action is bad for America.

The Republicans have been fortunate in one thing: their nervousness over the last months has been offset, indeed more than offset, by the self-damaging belligerency of the nation's black political leadership. From Representative Charles Rangel, who accused Republicans of harboring Nazi-like instincts, to Representative Kweisi Mfume, who threatened civil disobedience and boycott campaigns against states which eliminated preferential policies, the liberal

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black establishment has reacted as if the issue at stake were nothing less than a return to legal segregation.

Rangel's invocation of the Nazis aside, the most outrageous statements were those of Jesse Jackson; his indiscriminate attacks on critics of affirmative action may, indeed, have driven a few undecided Americans into the anti-preference camp. Not content with comparing Governor Pete Wilson to George Wallace blocking black students at the schoolhouse door, Jackson likened Wilson as well to Susan Smith, the South Carolina mother who murdered her two little boys and blamed the crime on a black carjacker. Jackson also blasted Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas as a "traitor to the civil-rights tradition" for his votes against racial preference.

But if black political leaders have handled things badly, the same cannot be said of the liberal establishment in general. Supporters of preference have, in fact, launched something of a counter-campaign aimed at preserving the core policy. Although there is little evidence that their arguments have changed public opinion, the mere fact that preferential programs are being defended in public discussion has helped dispel the image of a policy imposed in stealth by an elite intent on skirting the normal channels of debate.

This, at any rate, was the message strongly conveyed by the presidential address on the subject given by Bill Clinton on July 18. Indeed, Clinton may one day be remembered as the President who not only asked Americans to tolerate affirmative action but actually celebrated the policy as, in his words, something that has been "good for America." In endorsing a creed that has become indelibly associated with the notion of group as opposed to individual rights, Clinton revealed much not only about the course of contemporary liberalism but about his own core convictions.

Clinton's speech also conveyed an almost limitless confidence in the competence and fairness of government. The government, he declared, had adopted a safe middle course between, on the one hand, simply ignoring the systemic patterns of discrimination in American society and, on the other, imposing a rigid schedule of quotas. While conceding that affirmative action did occasionally produce bias against white men, the President ascribed this to overzealous employers, but not to overly aggressive enforcement officials. The best cure for flawed government, he suggested, was more government.

The President did, of course, deliver a few, proforma words of caution. He stressed his opposition to quotas "in theory or practice"; promised that "once a program has succeeded, it must be retired"; and opposed reverse discrimination or "preference for people who are not qualified." Yet despite a recently completed thorough review of about 160 federal affirmative-action programs, Clinton was able to point to no evidence of quotas; no programs whose success merited their elimination; and scarcely any cases of reverse discrimination or the promotion of the unqualified over the qualified. (As for a more relevant question, the promotion of the less qualified over the more qualified, this he conspicuously declined to take up.)

Finally, the President could not resist accusing critics of preferences of exploiting the "economic distress" of the American people. To oppose affirmative action, Clinton declared, gives them

> a way of turning resentment against the minorities or against a particular government program instead of having an honest debate about how we all got into the [economic] fix we are in, and what we are going to do together to get out of it.

This idea—that the millions of Americans who oppose racial preferences are motivated by rank political cynicism—is all the more remarkable coming from the mouth of a President allegedly intent on "healing" national differences over race. But like Clinton's embrace of affirmative action as "good for America," it too says a good deal about contemporary liberal attitudes on race.

LIKE many liberals, Clinton has come to adopt a very different rationale for affirmative action from what it was originally designed to do—different and much more ambitious. To understand the new conception, a little history is in order.

The original affirmative-action initiative emerged out of a belief that the racial neutrality enshrined in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 would not suffice to change the face of American society. According to this reasoning, even if individual blacks were no longer being denied opportunities, blacks as a whole would nevertheless continue to be consigned to second-class citizenship, simply because the country's economic and educational institutions functioned in a systematically discriminatory way. It was on the basis of this theory—known popularly as the doctrine of institutional racism—that the earliest affirmative-action plans called for lowering employment standards *en masse*, and for coercing corporations and government agencies into agreements which, in practice, often led to de-facto quotas.

Although these policies were unpopular with white Americans from the outset, they were grudgingly accepted by many on the grounds that blacks, who had recently been the objects of legal discrimination, arguably deserved some limited amount of compensatory justice. Over the years, however, the proposition that affirmative action was necessary to combat discrimination, or even the effects of past discrimination, became increasingly difficult to sustain. Employers met the conditions set down by enforcement agencies; employment and educational tests were

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changed, and personnel policies were adjusted to conform with guidelines established by the EEOC; and thousands of new businesses set their hiring policies entirely according to affirmative-action principles.

Faced with an increasingly shaky rationale, the advocates of preferences began to advance a new one: diversity. Like the original conception, diversity assumed an America in which racism (now joined by sexism) was rampant. But diversity was designed less to fight bias in particular instances than to create sweeping standards for the entire workforce, if not for the entire society. And where affirmative action had been intended, at least theoretically, to enhance the goal of societal integration, diversity celebrated difference and promoted "multiculturalism"—i.e., segregation. Implementing it necessitated a degree of racial and sexual consciousness virtually limitless in its application.

There are few figures in public life today as committed to the diversity idea as President Clinton. From the musical and literary selections at his inaugural ceremony, to his policy of setting aside one of every three positions in the new administration for women and minorities, to his having reserved the position of Attorney General for a woman, to the scrupulous balancing of his health-care task force according to race and gender, to the proposal advanced by that task force to impose a diversity system on the medical profession, the Clinton administration has sent an unmistakable message: as far as the government is concerned, America is a country that counts by race and gender.

The administration's attitude was perhaps most vividly demonstrated in a case involving a public-school teacher in Piscataway, New Jersey. In 1989, the local school board had been confronted with the need to lay off one of two home-economics teachers—one white, one black, with equal seniority and comparable performance assessments. Even though blacks were well-represented throughout the faculty, the board dismissed the white teacher on purely racial grounds. She then sued, and the Bush administration, citing flagrant reverse discrimination, supported her action. The Clinton administration, however, abruptly reversed course and supported the school board. It had to do so on grounds other than discrimination against the black teacher, which was never an issue in this case; the grounds it came up with were "diversity."

Given this pattern, it is hardly surprising that the much-touted review of federal programs commissioned by the President, and drawn on extensively in his speech, should have included a considerable amount of straightforward advocacy for the diversity principle. The report claims, for example, that the "competitiveness of our society and economy" depends upon building an "inclusive" economy, and adds that in science, education, and other fields, there will be "dangerous shortages of talent if we continue to draw the ranks of those professions so overwhelmingly from among white males only." The suggestion that women and minorities offer abilities different from and in some ways superior to those of white men is echoed elsewhere in the assertion that diversity "is critical to the quality of certain institutions and professions." Throughout, society's equilibrium is measured by the standard of proportional representation, and any deviation from the norm is regarded as a major social wrong.

"Mend it, don't end it," the President said of affirmative action in his speech. But by and large, the goal of his administration has been not to "mend" it but to expand it, to prosecute it more aggressively, and to justify it wherever possible on grounds of diversity.

STILL, the fact that the Clinton administration and some other liberals have begun to come clean about their position on affirmative action does not mean their position will prevail. Clinton's speech received highly favorable reviews in the media, but one may doubt how much influence his passionate defense will have on the ongoing national debate. The impact of the speech itself was eroded within a few days by Jesse Jackson's shrill campaign (described above) to dissuade the California Board of Regents from eliminating diversity standards in university admissions. And while Clinton's remarks were warmly applauded by black Democrats, they elicited little response from other party leaders. Indeed, the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), the group of moderate party figures which Clinton once chaired, subsequently issued a call for a major overhaul of affirmative action, including the outright elimination of government enforcement in hiring.

The Supreme Court has also gone on record, in *Adarand* v. *Pena*, opposing the right of the federal government to impose broad diversity standards on American institutions. Politically, the effects of *Adarand* are as yet hard to read. In the short term, it may actually simplify the challenge faced by the administration: to critics of affirmative action, Clinton can now point to the elimination of a few set-aside programs as evidence of his moderation and balance, while to supporters he can cite the authority of the Supreme Court to explain why reductions have become necessary. Republicans may respond in a similarly ambivalent fashion, continuing to carp about reverse discrimination while avoiding a legislative confrontation by arguing that the matter is being resolved by the courts.

In the longer term, though, *Adarand* may have a different effect. Especially when considered in conjunction with recent Court decisions restricting the racial gerrymandering of congressional districts, and limiting the judiciary's ability to order sweeping actions by state and local govern-

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ments to foster school integration, the case may actually signal the beginning of the end of racial preferences. But the road will almost certainly be a rocky one. *Adarand* will undoubtedly provoke a flurry of reverse-discrimination suits by white men who believe themselves to be the victims of an illegitimate preference system. And this, in turn, will intensify the formation of groups like the new Minority Enterprise Opportunity PAC, comprised of "disadvantaged" businesses which benefit from federal set-aside policies, and which have organized to ensure that a program envisioned as temporary will be elevated to the status of a permanent subsidy. And so it will go.

SUPPORTERS of affirmative action, including Bill Clinton, have called lately for an "honest debate" over its merits, in the hope that this will enhance its prospects for survival. In the words of Christopher Edley, a Harvard law professor who helped put together the administration's review of federal programs, America will benefit from a discussion in which "the opposing sides attempt to deal fairly and honestly" with each other. A policy of candor would certainly be a great improvement over the old practice of concealment and evasion; but it is not likely to convince the public that affirmative action is, in fact, good for America. Indeed, the more we learn about the inner workings of our race-regulation system, the less acceptable it appears.

If candor fails to persuade Americans of the beneficial effects of affirmative action, what then? One can surely expect supporters to marshal other, less worthy, arguments, of which the trump is likely to be that any withdrawal of affirmative action would trigger a dangerous response from a marginalized and embittered black population. Indeed, something along these lines was heard during the controversy over racial preferences in the California university system, as defenders of quotas pleaded with the regents to avoid taking action that would exacerbate racial tensions.

Here we see the folly of racial preferences come full circle. Affirmative action was initially adopted in part because of fears of urban insurrection. Now Americans are told that *preferences* cannot be abandoned, lest there be an outbreak of racial strife. Logically, this implies that affirmative action can be eliminated only when blacks themselves propose to do so. But blacks will always support preferences, just as every other constituency group has always fought to retain its government benefits.

The most likely prospect, then, is for a long struggle. Given the commitment of the black establishment to the status quo, and the apparent unwillingness of many others in political leadership to entertain anything beyond the most superficial change, we can expect a debate that is bitter and polarizing. Averting such a bleak outcome will demand a serious effort on the part of Republicans to learn the facts about race relations, and to recognize why deregulating race is as important as deregulation in other spheres. It will also demand action by that large but generally silent group of Democrats who, having experienced the deadly impact of racial preferences on their own once-proud party, are in a position to make a unique intellectual contribution to the current debate. Whether either of these things will occur remains, alas, an open question.

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My Life Without Leonard Cohen

Ruth R. Wisse

I MET Leonard Cohen in 1954 when I was a student in "Great Writings of European literature," the only undergraduate course at McGill University that satisfied my idea of the intellectual life. Satisfied it, though, to satiety. Whether our teacher, Louis Dudek, wanted to share his enthusiasm for every work he admired, or knew how slight were our chances of being educated by anyone else, he drove us through the modern classics like sheep before a storm. October 7: *Candide*; October 12: *Zadig*; October 21: *Rameau's Nephew*; October 26: Rousseau's *Confessions*; November 2: *La Nouvelle Heloise*; . . . I stopped attending some of my other classes.

Dudek's class met in the Arts Building on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 5 to 6 P.M., an hour when the regular university day was ending to make way for the apprentice accountants and other extension-school students. About 50 of us filled all the seats, making the tall room, with our coats and books piled along the aisles and walls, almost homey. By late autumn, darkness fell like a blind over the windows, so that if you tried to look out, you saw only your flushed reflection in the glass. I was anyway what you might call intense, and those classes stoked me to great excitement.

The late hour meant that on Fridays the Jewish majority of the class would not make it home in time to greet the Sabbath. Back then our Montreal Jewish homes were sufficiently lax to sustain this irregularity, and any conflicts between home and school were expected to be resolved democratically, that is, on the side of the Christian majority whose school McGill was deemed to be. My own immigrant parents were far too busy putting bread on the table and mourning their dead in Europe to notice infractions of Jewish law, and they worried more about how we impressed our teachers than about how we obeyed our God. McGill's discriminatory admissions policy, which required of Jews a higher academic standing and severely limited their access to certain faculties, had begun to change in 1950, only a few years before we arrived. This made us eager to prove worthy of the tolerance we were being shown, and a touch disdainful, too, of the bigots who had tried to keep us out. In truth, we felt fortunate to be nudged by our parents into a society that was still a little reluctant to welcome us. Growing up between these two sets of adults, both of which had either lost or were rapidly losing their cultural confidence, we felt we would almost inevitably improve on their ways of running things.

Dudek invited us to train for this prospect. Jews and Catholics and Protestants—the last, uncharacteristically, in the minority here—were to study together our common European past, and, leaving particularisms at the door, to experience as cosmopolitans our common Enlightenment, Romanticism, Realism, Modernity. Not until 30 years later did I realize how our teacher figured in this scheme. He was the child of Polish Catholics, hence almost as provisional as we were in that bastion of Protestant Canada, in an English department most of whose professors had been imported from Great Britain.

Dudek had just been graduated from Columbia University where he wrote his dissertation for Emory Neff, the same man who advised Lionel Trilling not to join Columbia's Department of English because Trilling would feel out of place there as a Jew. Poor Neff! This was like warning the caterpillar it would feel out of place as a butterfly. Through their mastery of his subject, these cultural misfits intended to become indistinguishable from Neff and his kind—or, perhaps, a brighter species.

Trilling and Dudek both trusted America. They believed that if they could prove reliable carriers of the Great Tradition, their ethnic past would not be held against them. In 1944, once he was teaching at Columbia, Trilling wrote that he could not discover anything in his professional intellectual life which could be traced back to his Jewish birth and rearing, and that the Jewish community could give no sustenance to the American artist or intellectual who was born a Jew. So, too, Dudek seemed never to have heard of Mickiewicz, Slowacki, Cyprian Norwid; Polish was one of the few major European literatures that remained unrepresented in his two-year cycle of readings.

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The course Dudek created for us was a literary version of Columbia's Great Books curriculum. He did not try to convert us to any system of belief; it was enough to pry us loose from the culture of our homes, from bourgeois platitudes, and in particular from religion, which Dudek identified with Catholic dogma, as the root of error. The revolution launched by Rousseau and Voltaire against established authority and the Church was to guide us in the management of our own eventual rebellion. Where we lived, 395 miles north of Greenwich Village, the modern period had barely begun. Our province of Quebec was said to be the most Catholic polity in the world, with the possible exception of Spain. It was still being run as the private fiefdom of Premier Maurice Duplessis, whose reign was known as "*le grand noirceur*," the Great Darkness, among other reasons for the brutal way he had crushed the Asbestos Strike of 1949. In that suffocating atmosphere, Voltaire's assault on organized religion sounded as seditious as on the day it was written.

Our need for these books was also exigent in ways that Dudek—already married and about to be divorced—may not have appreciated. To know how hungrily we read, you would have to know how virginal we were, barred until age sixteen from going to the movies, which were anyway so sharply censored by the Quebec authorities that a married couple could not be shown in bed together. Even our fantasies were chaste. By the time I got to college, the only "fast" boy I had ever dated had won a kissing contest by staying glued to my lips at a party, but barely pecked me on the cheek when he saw me home to my door. Rousseau brought me more information about sex than I had been able to find where I went looking for it, in *Forever Amber* and *The Amboy Dukes*.

More practically, only Dudek's literature class attracted a plurality of boys, clever boys from philosophy and economics and even science. I developed a crush on several of them, and of course on the teacher, since I could only properly learn from someone I loved. Education was so bound up for me with erotic risk that I wonder today how the young can learn under administrative watchdogs of "sexual harassment" who warn against the straying mind before it has a chance to tempt the nubile body. Of course, my love for my teacher remained pure, although it did not lack love's measure of pain.

Dudek assumed that what we studied in class was essential for life. And for that purpose, was not literature extraordinary? Its moral arguments were never straightforward, as they aspired to be in philosophy or law, but complicated as in life by a thousand variable conditions. Everything hung on the timbre of the voice that pronounced a judgment, on how much a man had paid for his bread out of the sum still left in his pocket. Reading Goethe, Schiller, Novalis, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Thomas Mann; Turgenev, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and Chekhov; Chateaubriand, Flaubert, Baudelaire, Gide, and Céline; Marcel Proust and James Joyce, Samuel Butler and D. H. Lawrence, T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound . . . reading with Dudek the great authors who had brought our culture into being, I felt both our lateness and our timeliness in studying the Great Tradition. If, as epigones, we would never innovate on the grandest scale, there was still plenty to apprehend and interpret. We were yet required to stir up our section of the globe that lay in ursine slumber. And because we had absorbed their teachings, perhaps we would do better than our predecessors on our relatively unspoiled and younger continent, guarding against lunatic excess.

I RECENTLY came across an entry by Louis Dudek, now better known as one of Canada's modern poets, in *Contemporary Authors Autobiography Series*. There he tells how in 1951 he returned home to Montreal with his Columbia Ph.D. to work on poetry and to teach at McGill:

> It may be that the worst teachers, as well as the best, are teachers with a mission, but I came with the confidence that I had something very important to teach. There were in fact two things. The first was modern poetry and literature, which had evolved fully abroad but which had barely started in Canada with small groups of poets having a limited audience. . . . The second program was the massive movement of European literature and thought since the 18th century, with its profound practical implications, which students' minds had still to experience, like buckets of cold water thrown at them from a high lectern.

It was the second mission that doused me into intellectual wakefulness. Leonard Cohen was launched by the first.

I believe it was Louis who introduced me to Leonard; certainly it was because of Leonard that I began to call my teacher Louis. Still an undergraduate in the English department—and reputed to have failed his third try at then-compulsory Latin—Leonard did not treat his teacher with my kind of deference but more like a colleague, on equal terms.

Louis seemed to prefer it that way. He had decided to launch the McGill Poetry Series with a volume of Leonard's Cohen's verse, to be published while its author was still in college. Since no one had enough money for the project, Louis adopted the stratagem of selling advance subscriptions, at $1 a book. An advance sale of 500 copies would guarantee at least a small distribution, as well as down payment for the printer.

This is where I came into the picture. I was accustomed to the system of *prenumerantn*, through which my parents supported the publication of several local Yiddish authors. Appointing myself head of Dudek's sales team, I went down to the

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nearest Woolworth's, bought a couple of receipt books, and lickety-split sold over 200 advance copies. My work as feature editor at the *McGill Daily* had brought me into contact with so many students and teachers that I was able to sell my quota strictly on campus among people I knew. Anyway, the name Leonard Cohen was already a draw.

IF YOU are one of Leonard Cohen's millions of popular-music fans, one of those who planned a seduction or dreamed of being seduced to the strains of his "Bird on a Wire," you still may not know that before he released his first record album in 1967, he had published four books of poetry and two novels, a feat anywhere, and especially in Canada where it can feel almost disloyal to the cold climate and to the collectivist society to produce too much too fast. American publicity releases always say that Leonard was launched in 1966 when Judy Collins recorded his song "Suzanne" for her album, *In My Life*. But by local standards, Canada's premier publisher, McClelland & Stewart, had already raised him from the ranks of the little magazines into literary prominence when they published his second book of poems, *The Spice-Box of Earth*, in 1961. It surprised no one that his novels, *The Favorite Game* (1963) and *Beautiful Losers* (1966), became Canadian best-sellers.

Leonard's performance career was also secured in Canada before he began to cut his records and make videos in the United States. In 1965, the National Film Board decided to film a reading tour of four major poets: Irving Layton, Earl Birney, Phyllis Gotlieb, and younger-by-a-generation Leonard Cohen. The finished product featured Leonard alone—I suspect the film-makers knew that Leonard represented the difference between a dutiful documentary and the cult classic this film would eventually become. Even at that age Leonard had an awkward grace that women found appealing and men unthreatening. He cultivated the lean and hungry look of someone who feeds on himself, but the corner of his mouth was always playing around some quip, some clever remark, to let you know that he did not take himself all that seriously. *Caveat emptor*, he warned the audience, his elegant way of saying: stay cool.

Once Leonard started recording for the big companies and doing European tours, he used to say that he had gotten caught between two critical establishments, the literary people accusing him of selling out because he was making money in the rock world, the rock critics suggesting that he did not know or care enough about music, "that my tunes are very limited, as though I couldn't work in an augmented chord if I thought it was needed." One would have thought the opposite—that stardom protected Leonard from the insularity of the poetry world, while his higher literary standards won him the awe of music critics accustomed to thinner gruel. In any case, readers unfamiliar with either of Leonard's two worlds may now conveniently consult a volume in which he has brought them together: *Stranger Music* (1993), published simultaneously in the United States and Canada and advertised as "the best work of one of the most enduring poet/songwriters of our time."

SO LEONARD could not have awoken one morning, like Lord Byron, to find himself famous, because he was already celebrated by the time I knew him at college. Louis Dudek's two-pronged program for a Canadian literary renaissance—one prong creative, the other critical—reached out to different constituencies which split pretty much along the social divide between "Westmount" and "Outremont," the old money and the immigrant sections around the mountain that gives Montreal its name. Leonard Cohen was the undisputed star of the artistic Westmount crowd. His family was prominent in that wealthy section of the city where second- and third-generation Jews had moved in alongside older, monied Protestants. His uncles in top hats presided over the Shaar Hashomayim Synagogue, built on the scale of a cathedral.

As befit a poet, Leonard belonged to the slightly déclassé branch of the Cohen family (his Russian-born and -accented mother was said to have remained unaccepted by her in-laws), which added a touch of vulnerability to his inherited social standing. Already in college he bore the trace of a wound, the aura of a lover, the mantle of the artist. His father had died when he was nine years old. His poems about the body of "Freia," a mere consonant away from the girl we recognized as Freda, won for him the erotic distinction of a Shelley, a D. H. Lawrence. So bold a lover was bound to be as sure a poet.

He was also a good instrumentalist, playing backstage guitar for the dramatic society's production of *Twelfth Night*. From later publicity blurbs I learned that "while attending McGill University he formed a country-western trio called the Buckskin Boys."

I belonged to the scruffier group around the *Daily*. Most of my friends held down part-time jobs and were subtly ashamed of their immigrant families. In some of our homes the debate over Stalin and Trotsky was still going strong. Like the "New York intellectuals" whom we were then beginning to read, we were more readily attracted to social commentary and criticism than to the production of art.

My own attitude to "Westmount" and "Outremont" had been determined by my mother, though at the time I would have swallowed poison rather than credit her influence. When we had arrived in Montreal from Europe in 1940, Mother insisted on moving us against the sociological tide from our first rented home in the western part of the city to the immigrant side of

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the mountain, where she could send us to Yiddish day schools and be "among her own people." My parents' friends were teachers and struggling writers and artists, and I inherited her inverted snobbery, dismissing Westmount Jews as effete and assimilationist. Had I known that Leonard Cohen was a prized member of Phi Epsilon Pi, I would have scorned him for belonging to a fraternity—and to the more privileged of McGill's two Jewish fraternities at that! I was not enough in the know to know.

Still and all, let me not pretend that our two social circles were so far apart. Had Louis not introduced us, I would have met Leonard Cohen sooner or later. Our mothers, both named Masha, both "foreign," musical, complicated women, actually knew one another through a mutual acquaintance whose nephew, named Leonard, I was soon to marry. (I cannot say "also named Leonard" because Cohen was for me the "also.") The aunt of my husband-to-be was a friend of Masha Cohen's, and the two women were members of the same music-appreciation group. My Leonard, who was raised by his aunt, had known the Cohens since childhood. Then there was Freia-Freda, whose father did business with mine.

I DOUBT very much that Dudek ever recognized among his Jewish students the social distinctions that were so obvious to us. The differences he valued were between intellectuals and poets, the precious few and the sanctified fewer. If at first I accepted Leonard Cohen's status as a poet on faith, it was because Louis admired him. Only after I had undertaken to sell the poems did I begin to read them.

They were hauntingly elegant, as though a noble son had fallen in among tradesfolk while retaining the language of a softer ancestry. Cohen had taken his surname—Hebrew for "priest"—as his destiny. He spoke as a titled member of the priestly caste, in a slightly archaic diction, of sacrifice and sin, guilt offerings and ritual. Never obscuring his Jewish origins, this priest of poetry was simultaneously also privy to the sacred teachings of other poet-gods and their anointed singers—Greeks, Romans, and Christians.

> If I had a shining head
> and people turned to stare at me
> in the street cars;
> and I could stretch my body
> through the bright water
> and keep abreast of fish and water snakes;
> if I could ruin my feathers
> in flight before the sun;
> do you think that I would
> remain in this room,
> reciting poems to you,
> and making outrageous dreams
> with the smallest movements
> of your mouth?

With what wit and grace the poet here sacrifices himself on the altar of the everyday, putting himself down, assuming the shape of human clay to flatter us with his assumed likeness to ourselves. But we are not fooled. This lovely music, this winning modesty, this lordly resonance, will not, cannot, ultimately waste itself on a little scene of seduction with a skittish girl. Only an Icarus could allow himself to fly so low, and tell about it.

Before I read Leonard Cohen, I did not recognize the poetic potential in our lives. Thanks to my parents, I was familiar with several Montreal Yiddish poets, whose language unfairly made me think they were describing Polish mountain ranges when they wrote about a trip to our Laurentians. Their experience was separated from mine by a significant generation. So, too, was the poetry of our local teachers—the exuberant Jew Irving Layton, the cosmopolitan ex-Catholic Louis Dudek, and the witty Protestant Frank R. Scott—who so enjoyed the company of us youngsters that they were happy to publish their verse in our student magazines. Leonard Cohen's Montreal, by contrast, was my very own, at once familiar and made mythic in marvelous phrases.

"My lady was found mutilated/in a Mountain Street boarding house. . . ." Rushing to meet a friend at Ogilvy's, at the corner of Mountain Street and Ste. Catherine, I wondered behind which familiar door the lady's purple blood was staining the sheets. "Northeastern Lunch,/with rotting noses and tweed caps. . . ." I went looking for this hangout on Clark Street one day, to see whether I could recognize its denizens on the basis of Leonard's descriptions. "Had we nothing to prove but love/ we might have leaned all night at that window,/ merely beside each other,/ watching Peel Street. . . ." Here was my city caught up in romance, like ancient London, like Paris.

I should confess that Leonard Cohen did not appeal to me as a lover, not even in his poems. By the time Louis introduced us I had been swept up in the romance that has claimed me for a lifetime, so that my overtaxed heart had no further inclination to roam. This was my immense good fortune. My schoolgirl passion for Louis would have made it awkward to work with his protégé had I fancied myself attracted to them both. More than stirring romance in me, Leonard enlarged my sense of the here and now. His poems were heavy with loss in a way that made the present more valuable, the small experience more fragile and precious. I think I remember each and every time I spent with him, as if the moment itself were a poem I had to learn by heart.

One evening the three of us went out to dinner to talk about The Book. I would have expected us to go to one of the small French restaurants for which the city is famous, or to the Rose Marie, first of the tiny Hungarian restaurants that had opened right near McGill. That shows how little I understood the aesthetic rules of the game. We went to Joe's Steak House on Metcalf Street,

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where your choices were with or without garlic and *karnatsel* (spiced sausage). The lack of such refinements as a tablecloth made it easier to use the tabletop as a desk while eating. In the absence of true aristocratic possibilities, Louis and Leonard preferred to eat where there were no pretensions that food was anything but food. (The favorite hangout of writers in downtown Montreal became Ben's, the all-night downtown deli whose owners eventually consecrated a Poets' Corner and hung framed photographs of Dudek, Cohen, *et al.* like retired boxers.)

Once inside, we talked happily for a couple of hours about the physical properties of the projected volume, the thickness of the paper, the font of the type, the arrangement of the poems and of Freda's accompanying drawings. We could not settle on a title then and there, but Leonard's eventual choice, *Let Us Compare Mythologies*, had the Jew playing gracious host to other civilizations, with a touch of formality that was only slightly ironic at his own expense. I thought of the book as a response to T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, which subordinates the insignificance of the present to the grandeur of the past. Not so in the hierarchy of suffering to which Leonard Cohen was heir. If anything, the experience of Jews in our lifetime had dwarfed the agony of all earlier centuries. In our postwar period of mourning, our Montreal orphan poet drew on both the 20th and past centuries for his psalter of the aching heart.

Leonard in those days had many admirable qualities that did not yet figure prominently in his ballads. He was clever, shrewd, even a little sly, with a satirist's critical intelligence. I sensed that even then he had already gotten clear of Louis, not only because he considered himself the truer poet but because he was cannier all around, in his handling of people and in his understanding of markets and fame. In Leonard's presence I always felt alert as though I had joined a hunter on the trail. No one else I knew took so much license in speaking the truth. One day I saw him standing with his closest buddy, Morty Rosengarten, on the corner of Sherbrooke Street. "Where are you going?" asked I, who was always on my way somewhere. "We're watching the girls come out for spring," he said, just standing there. Until he said it, I had not registered that it was already spring, or that one did not have to be King Ahasuerus to arrange for a parade of beauties.

You may wonder why, if I was so much in love with literature, I did not aspire to become a writer myself instead of consigning my ambition to someone else. We can imagine what the feminists would say about this. Having had the good fortune to come of age before women's lib, I never doubted my freedom to become anything I pleased, and writing was well within my sights. But I had more than one ambition. What I wanted most in those final years of college was to become a young wife, and in trying to find a good father for my yet-unconceived children, I may also have thought it possible, by analogy, to find a suitable author for my unformed works. Writing loomed for me not as an ordinary profession like journalism or teaching, both of which I knew I could manage, but as the profession of wisdom, and I knew I was not yet wise. Because I was not an orphan, I felt I would have to learn pain the long way, through the vicissitudes of years, and meanwhile I would invest ambition in others who wrote better, and knew more of what was important.

Once I was stopped on campus by Frank Scott, poet and professor of law, whom I had met at several lectures and poetry readings. He said to me, quite out of the blue, "Write! Write! Get up every morning at five and write before the day begins!" Like Louis, Frank Scott valued writing above all other pursuits, which is why he paid much more attention to young campus writers than to his finest law students. I fully shared his prejudice, but though flattered by his advice, I did not think it was warranted on the basis of such essays of mine as he had seen in the *McGill Daily*. I assumed it was himself he must have been urging on to greater disciplined effort.

About this hunger for literature, Leonard Cohen was to write a few years later that Canadians were "desperate for a Keats." Not true in my case. I was desperate for a Cohen. I bet on him as on a racehorse, prayed for him as for an angel. His confidence and his talent were such that I accorded to him my highest hopes, certain that he would become the guardian truth-teller of my generation.

In the winter of my senior year I became engaged to be married. Leonard Cohen had graduated by then, and I think he was living in one of those downtown rented rooms that had already become the setting for many of his poems. I sent him an invitation to the engagement party in my parents' home on New Year's Eve, 1956-57, a big, open party that merged for the first time the two families and sets of friends being joined through our union. As it was New Year's, people came and went all evening long, and we hosts kept making introductions while passing out food and drinks.

Cohen's arrival created a stir. He had brought along a couple of people I did not know, one of them his cousin Robert Hershorn. Possibly because of the coincidence of names, more likely because of his appearance and behavior, Hershorn reminded me of Robert Cohn in Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, who becomes more thoroughly dislikable the longer he tries to hang in with the crowd. Hershorn seemed to have no social scruples, at least not in the company of people he considered his social inferiors. He quickly got himself drunk, and it fell to my father, who was in charge of the bar, to deal with the ugly scene he seemed intent on creating.

This is what I remember: standing beside the

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makeshift bar in the dining room, my father takes a coin from his pocket and holds it out for Hershorn to see. The bad boy grins. "Mr. Hershorn," says my father, "I'm glad you're a betting man." Instead of threatening him with the rules of the house, Father challenges his guest to abide by the rules of chance, which were likelier to command his respect: heads or tails—you go on drinking or you stop. Father's sobriety may have determined his win of the toss, allowing the party to continue without incident.

The scene I witnessed, an example of my father's negotiating skill, acquired with the passage of years an ominous edge. Hershorn was a disappointing entourage for Leonard Cohen—nor did he himself much like being fixed in the auxiliary role of the artist's richer, less talented relative. That night at the party we saw an early trace of the rot that would eventually devour him. Hershorn died of a heroin overdose in Hong Kong in 1972. By then he had pushed drugs to quite a number of young Montrealers, probably including his cousin. He was the dark side of Leonard's celebrity; while Leonard as a working artist did not let himself be destroyed, he was gradually changed by substances that affect the character of a man along with his mind. A Cohen—a true member of the priesthood—has the obligation to remain unblemished, no matter what forms of impurity are rampant in the land. Not every Cohen fulfills his priestly destiny, but none can fulfill it who does not adhere to the priestly code.

The first time I remember feeling disappointed in Leonard was, in fact, in Robert Hershorn's apartment. It must have been in the early 60's, when the fault line was widening between those who did and those who did not inhale. I had arrived there not through any planned engagement, but the way things normally happened between us. We would accidentally meet somewhere in the downtown area where we both lived; we would begin talking; and if neither of us had anything pressing to do, we would keep talking until there was no time or no talk left. That afternoon we had ended up in Hershorn's apartment, where Leonard may not have been staying but where he certainly felt at home. The place was very spacious, and sparsely furnished.

On the otherwise bare coffee table lay a book I'd never heard of, *I Ching*. At first I thought it might be Oriental poetry, like the books of *haiku* I used to pick up at Charles Tuttle's store in Rutland, Vermont. But Leonard explained to me that this was actually a way of life, or rather a way of determining life. Taking out of his pocket a couple of Canadian dimes, he began to demonstrate how, by flipping the coins and consulting them in tandem with the writings of the *I Ching*, we could alter the otherwise ego-driven nature of our behavior. It seemed such utter nonsense that I was sure it must be a game, perhaps an Asian form of *Monopoly*.

The more eloquently he described the subtleties of the method, the more ridiculous I thought he was being. When I realized that Leonard took all of this seriously, and when he realized that I did not, the conversation ended and I went home. Try as I might to convince myself that poets must draw their inspiration from all new forms of language, I was shocked that anyone whose ancestors had written the Talmud could profess enthusiasm for this stuff.

In the years that followed, Leonard's interest in the *I Ching* gave way to a series of enthusiasms: for Immanuel Velikovsky's theory of creation; for kabbalistic mysticism; for Indian meditation. Almost every time I saw him he seemed under the impression of some new idea or new way of experiencing the world. One afternoon, through a coincidental three-way meeting on the McGill campus, Louis, Leonard, and I found ourselves intensely debating the merits of hallucinogens, with Leonard making the salesman's pitch, Louis in opposition, and myself as the engaged audience.

Leonard declared himself surprised that, *as a poet*, Louis would forgo the chance to expand his mental experience. How could he take a stand against something he had not even tried? Louis said, pointing to his head: "Look! I have up here the most intricate machine in the world. Why would any sane person take a hammer and smash the thing to pieces for the sake of 'a new adventure'?" Not destruction but creation was at stake, replied Leonard. There was much to be gained! But when he began to describe the beauties of one such trip, Louis grew impatient: "I go home," he said, "and I lie back on the sofa listening to Mozart. There I experience all the adventures in beauty that I want for."

This was the only time I had ever seen him angry with Leonard, like a father grown impatient with his son, or a teacher whose best student has decided to pursue the wrong career. In truth, Leonard was no longer the same poet whom Louis had launched. He had started out as the casualty of a mythic struggle, now he was turning into a casualty of his times.

I was not as firm in my judgment as Louis. Though I too had decided to forgo the Great Experiment, and hence gratefully applauded Louis's defense of the unaltered brain, I was also a customer for Leonard's songs that took me down like Suzanne to a place near the river where . . . a lover can touch your perfect body with his mind. The 60's was when I had three children, and through the 70's I raised them. As I read of burning flags and burning bras, and witnessed crumbling marriages and vows, I grew more protective of family and more respectful of creative sobriety. Still—I would have had to be dead and buried not to respond to the lulling throb of Leonard's voice, heard everywhere and especially in his hometown where I lived.

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I attended many of his performances, from the first time he appeared at the makeshift nightclub above Dunn's Restaurant on Ste. Catherine to the royal "Homecomings" he was periodically accorded at the Place des Arts once he had become a star. He knew the heart's stubborn way of drawing you toward pain. Sometimes in the evening, putting on music—not Mozart, but Cohen—I felt so sweet a sorrow I could have drifted out the open window on a moonbeam to join his legion of wartorn lovers.

All the Sisters of Mercy
they are not departed or gone
They were waiting for me
when I thought that I just can't go on
And they brought me their comfort
and later they brought me this song
Oh I hope you run into them
you who've been traveling so long.

Leonard turned our awkward and dangerously prolonged adolescence into a languorous, almost enviable, season of longing. All that we had experienced as fumbling youths in our lonely self-doubt he kept on refining through images of love and war, so that Castro the revolutionary and Berlin the city became metaphors for our excesses and agonies. This was at once the gift and limitation of his verse. He remained the voice of our teens, deepening with the years.

Already after his first trip abroad, he told me how much more comfortable he felt on the Greek isle of Hydra than in Israel, which I took to mean: don't expect me to become your Jewish ally. Yet I did assume that anyone as talented and intelligent as he would eventually stop using "Jew" and "war" as metaphors—as he often did in his songs—and begin thinking about them for real. I expected him to shoulder moral authority in a civilization that was threatening to unravel. That is why this reminiscence is as much about my thwarted desire that Leonard *become* the writer of my time as it is about his disinclination to satisfy my need.

IT WAS Louis Dudek who felt the brunt of the changes that came over our society in the 1960's. Leonard's defense of drugs was just part of the general assault on the program of rational enlightenment and creative revitalization that Dudek had tried to implement at McGill. In the same autobiographical entry from which I quoted above, Dudek explains why he eventually felt obliged to drop the course that had done so much to educate me.

> This huge course—a study, really, of the subversive currents in modern thought—was virtually brought to an end by the student revolution in the 60's. "What I have been teaching you, and warning you against," I said to my students, "has now arrived, right here in the classroom"—as radical students began to raid the lecture halls and harangue teachers. The course in question was familiarly known as "*Journey to the End of the Night*," after Céline's novel, which terminated the two-year course—and the night, it seemed, had closed in upon us.

Leonard took no part in that student revolution. Aesthetically, temperamentally, he was as removed from the boorish radicals as a Romanov from the Bolsheviks. But still he saw his opportunity among the young. He concentrated programmatically on the first-person singular and cultivated an attitude of philosophical indifference, as though by opposing politics altogether he could avoid having to take sides. For the public record, though, he fell right into step with the flower-childrens' brigades. A mid-60's book title, *Flowers for Hitler*, advertised his readiness to joke about the moral categories of good and evil, villainy and martyrdom.

He told reporters he had gone to Cuba to fight with Castro, then qualified his purpose: "Unless I can get it straight with myself, no enterprise is going to be very meaningful." Parodying the military, he shaved his hair to the skull and took to wearing a coat with epaulets. The trivializing camouflage paid off. In France, where he drew 130,000 to an outdoor concert, he was forgiven his lack of real revolutionary zeal and defended against charges by the radical Left that he was a reactionary. His French biographer, Jacques Vassal, praised Leonard Cohen for the honesty "if not the courage" of refusing to judge others because he was not ready to judge himself.

I must have disappointed Louis Dudek in my own way. Being a Jew, which while I was at college had seemed no more than an accident of birth, hence hardly a sound basis for the rational life, became for me what cosmopolitanism was for him, the truest way of approaching the world. Louis had taught me to think for myself and, when necessary, to challenge the received ideas of the day. I discovered that the affiliated Jew is the iconoclast of every age, and by the mid-1970's, when I realized that neither Leonard Cohen nor anyone else would be the sufficient truth-teller of my generation, I began to write for myself.

I often wince at my burlap prose beside Cohen's silken lyrics. But then, I also have regrets about him, who cast himself as love's solitary survivor so that he would not have to bear the weight of his and my lonely community, or of the tattered culture that belongs to us all.

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Capitalism for Humans

George Weigel

DEMOCRATS are made, not born; and so are democratic capitalists. Children, who are born tyrants and who quickly display a propensity for forming neighborhood and schoolyard aristocracies, must be trained in the arts of civility and the ethos of democratic equality. As for economics, well, anyone who has tried to help a child manage an allowance knows that saving, investment, and deferred gratification do not occur spontaneously to the untutored spirit. That democracy and the market are "learned behaviors" seems a matter of common sense.

Yet when I urge this truism on students and colleagues in the new democracies of East Central Europe, their first reaction is often incomprehension, sometimes bordering on annoyance. During the hard days of anti-Communist resistance, the dissidents in those countries used to say that they wanted a "normal society"—by which they meant civil liberties, democratic politics, and a market-based economy. Now many of the attributes of that long-sought normality are in place: real political parties, a free press, real elections following real campaigns, a growing small-business sector, investment opportunities, a stock market, and convertible currencies. Is that not, they ask, sufficient? Is it not "normality"?

Only when a friendly interlocutor presses the issue does it turn out that something does seem missing, or at least insufficiently secure. And that something involves democratic culture, or the *ethic* of the free society. The institutions of a free polity and a free economy can indeed endure for generations—but only if the people become democrats and democratic capitalists, over and over again. In wrestling with that fact of life, the new democracies of East Central Europe are beginning to discover that in a democracy, you never get to "normal" once and for all; the free society is an ongoing experiment in a people's capacity for self-governance and self-restraint.

Americans are making a similar discovery—or, in our case, rediscovery. The Republican revolution of November 1994 was driven in large part by the conviction that, even amid a booming economy, American democracy was imperiled. Thus it is not difficult to find a common thread of concern running through the debates over seemingly disparate issues like welfare reform, crime, parental choice in education, affirmative action, school prayer, "gay rights," the National Endowment for the Arts, and censorship of the Internet: the concern that America is suffering not simply from the overreaching and incompetence of the nanny state, but from a character deficit, even a virtue deficit. The worship of the great god "I" does bad things to individuals; it also turns out to have disturbing, even terrible, *public* consequences.

Thus in Prague and Cracow, Vilnius and Bratislava, Detroit, Los Angeles, and Washington, D.C., an intuition has begun to sharpen into an idea: culture is "prior" to politics and economics. The foundations of sound democratic politics and productive market economics rest on habits of heart and mind. At the end of a century whose intellectual hallmark has been positivism in its various guises, that is a deliciously ironic thought.

THE "return to culture" has even caused an interesting intellectual ferment in the dismal science of economics. There, the in-house debate has been dominated for over a generation by anti-statist neoclassicists like Milton Friedman, Gary Becker, and George Stigler; their principal challengers have been not the moribund Marxists or the exhausted Keynesians but neomercantilist proponents of a state-led "industrial policy" like James Fallows, Laura D'Andrea Tyson, Chalmers Johnson, Clyde Prestowitz, *et al.* Because the contest between these two schools has had an impact on such mediagenic political matters as international trade policy, their debates may seem to occupy the cutting edge. But while the numbers-crunchers lob volleys of statistics back and forth, an intriguingly complex moral argument for, and about, capitalism has been redefining the frontiers, and even the nature, of economic thought.

This trend first became visible in the early 80's, when the Catholic scholar Michael Novak published *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* at approximately the same time that the Lutheran theologian Robert Benne challenged liberal

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Protestantism's romance with socialism in *The Ethic of Capitalism: A Moral Reassessment.* In the mid-80's, Peter L. Berger, the distinguished sociologist of religion, launched the Institute for the Study of Economic Culture at Boston University, which has subsequently produced pathbreaking work on the socioeconomic impact of Latin American Pentecostalism and the complex interaction of Islam and capitalism in several East Asian settings.

Then there was *Centesimus Annus*, the 1991 encyclical of Pope John Paul II that set a decisively new course by abandoning the attempt to define a "Catholic third way" between socialism and capitalism. The institutional arguments, John Paul II seemed to suggest, are over: if, under modern conditions, you want a free society that protects the basic rights of persons while advancing the common good, you choose a democratic polity and a market-based economy. The really interesting and urgent questions have to do with the vitality of the moral-cultural system that channels the energies of democracy and the market so that they serve the ends of human flourishing.

Novak, Benne, Berger, and John Paul share a profound interest in Christian theology: To more hard-boiled analysts, this makes them suspect witnesses, even special-pleaders. But now comes an elaborately empirical and cross-cultural argument about "the improbable power of culture in the making of economic society." And its author is none other than the relentlessly provocative Francis Fukuyama, who in the summer of 1989 notoriously proposed in the *National Interest* that we had reached the "end of history."

It takes a certain *chutzpah* to announce the end of history. Yet with impressive stubbornness, Fukuyama has declined to back off the claim that democratic capitalism is now the only game in town, so to speak. Or, as he puts it today, "the world's advanced countries have no alternative model of political and economic organization other than democratic capitalism to which they can aspire." In this sense, "history," understood as "a broad evolution of human societies advancing toward a final goal," is over: which raises the question, now what?

In his 1989 essay, Fukuyama lamented that things would be rather dull on the far side of history. The "worldwide ideological struggle [against Communism] that had called forth daring, courage, imagination, and idealism" would be succeeded by something far less energizing—"the endless solving of technical problems, environmental concerns, and the satisfaction of sophisticated consumer demands." It was a depressing prospect, and it struck me and others as the least persuasive element of the Fukuyama proposition. For "history" was, and is, more than a matter of political and economic institutions. History is painting, sculpture, and architecture; theology and ethics and religious ritual; poetry, literature, music, and dance; the pattern of relationships between men and women, parents and children, the old and the young.

Now, in *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity*,* Fukuyama has come to agree that there is life after history, after all. The end of history does not mean "an end to society's challenges." Moreover, the primary threats to democratic capitalist society cannot be met by recourse to the mechanisms of the democratic polity—which is to say, by "ambitious social engineering." Rather, the "post-historical" testing of democratic capitalism is taking place outside electoral politics, and outside the marketplace, too. The results will be determined in the arena of civil society, "a complex welter of intermediate institutions, including businesses, voluntary associations, educational institutions, clubs, unions, media, charities, and churches," of which the most crucial is the family.

FUKUYAMA'S refined position begins with a brisk critique of the claim that economics is an independent variable whose peculiar laws are unaffected by the surrounding culture. On the contrary, he argues, the economy is a crucial arena of human *sociability*. The "rational-actor" model favored by economists is insufficient because it accounts for only one (albeit important) dimension of economic activity. The same human being who pursues his individual interests also craves fellowship in common enterprises. Indeed, Fukuyama goes so far as to suggest that the well-ordered contemporary workplace, with its emphasis on teamwork, initiative, and devolved decision-making, can help "moderate and overcome" the *anomie* that is inherent in modern life.

Trust then proceeds to explore how the structures of economic life are shaped by distinctive cultural norms and habits—in China, Italy, France, Korea, Japan, Germany, and the U.S. These detailed case studies provide in turn the empirical basis for Fukuyama's major proposal: that the level of "trust" in a society or nation—"the expectation that arises within a community of regular, honest, and cooperative behavior, based on commonly shared norms"—is the key variable determining its capacity to compete in the modern world.

Fukuyama agrees with Novak and John Paul II that human capital, in the form of imagination and creativity, is *the* natural resource today. But he gives a rich empirical texture to the theologians' claim by showing, through his case studies, that the critical form of human capital is *social* capital, or the "ability of people to work together for common purposes in groups and organizations." And the most important kind of social capital, in turn, is what he terms "spontaneous sociability": the ability "to form new associations and to cooperate within the terms of reference

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they establish." Thus, according to Fukuyama, societies with a high capacity for spontaneous sociability—the United States, Japan, and Germany—enjoy decidedly lower social and economic "transaction costs," and hence a distinct comparative advantage, over "low-trust" societies like Italy, France, and China, where the state has to compensate for the incapacities of civil society.

The forms through which "spontaneous sociability" is institutionalized will of course differ from society to society. But the crucial point about any free society is that the effective functioning of the market and of democracy does not and cannot depend solely on rational actors making decisions about optimizing their personal advantage. In fact, things may work the other way around. As Fukuyama writes:

> If the institutions of democracy and capitalism are to work properly, they must coexist with certain premodern cultural habits that ensure their proper functioning. Law, contract, and economic rationality provide a necessary but not sufficient basis for both the stability and prosperity of post-industrial societies; they must as well be leavened with reciprocity, moral obligation, duty toward community, and trust, which are based in habit rather than rational calculation. The latter are not anachronisms in a modern society but rather the *sine qua non* of the latter's success.

In other words, efficiency so prized by economists is itself one by-product of preexisting moral communities.

FULLY one-third of *Trust* involves a comparative study of modernizing Asian economies and societies, analyzing the cultural and historical roots of their relative capacities for spontaneous sociability. Amid the healthy diversity of the many "Asian miracles," Fukuyama discerns "two rival economic cultures arising . . . one Japanese and the other Chinese." The two share a number of traits: a respect for education, a work ethic, and a willingness to give the state a large role in shaping the course of economic development. But there are dramatic differences in "sociability" among Asian societies, and especially between "low-trust" China and "high-trust" Japan. Those differences (among others) help account for the markedly different positions of Japan and China in the world marketplace.

Fukuyama's stress on Japan's social capital—"the greatest degree of spontaneous sociability among contemporary nations"—cuts decisively against the views of proponents of a Western "industrial policy" for whom MITI, the Japanese Ministry of International Trade and Industry, is an omnipotent genie whose arcane machinations Americans would do well to emulate. Aspects of Fukuyama's own analysis are surely debatable, but there is something refreshing and mind-clearing about his insistence that, even in the case of Japan, culture, not governmental action, is the key to understanding relative national performance.

That same focus leads to another provocation, namely, Fukuyama's disinclination to join the rush onto the China bandwagon. Fukuyama gives China due credit for its amazing economic performance over the past decade. But he also raises sharp questions about the future of this particular miracle. Will China's "lack of a spontaneous tendency toward large organizations" (itself a by-product of Chinese familism) make it difficult to create major strategic industries where scale is a crucial factor in success? Can a country without stable property rights and a reliable code of commercial law continue to boom along *ad infinitum*?

Then there are the politics of a post-Deng China. Given the "sociability" deficit in Chinese culture, the state will surely continue to be a major player in the economy. But can China produce "political stability born out of a basic legitimacy of its political institutions"? Not under Communism; but perhaps not after, either. For, as Fukuyama notes, it is not at all certain that "China's political institutions will survive the enormous socioeconomic pressures created by its headlong industrialization, or whether there will even be a unitary state by the 21st century." Neither instability nor politically driven economic planning nor civil war would seem to be optimum conditions for lengthening the run of the "Chinese miracle."*

AND what about us? Fukuyama's welcome skepticism about China is paralleled by his bracing challenge to liberal fashions in American historiography and political theory. The United States, he argues, is not, was not, and never can be merely a political-legal system, a republic of procedures. Rather, the American experiment has worked to the degree it has because a morally assertive cultural tradition, originally sectarian-Protestant, evolved into a "broadly-accessible identity" for all Americans, thus creating the conditions both for economically useful social capital and for democratically essential civil society.

Fukuyama insists that the United States has never been a radically "individualistic" society. Sectarian Protestantism itself combined two strands: individualism, understood in terms of the believer's unmediated relation to God, was tempered socially by a revivalist-driven proclivity for forming strong communities built around shared moral codes. As for the Founders, they drew, to be sure, on a form of liberal political theory that emphasized individual rights; and Americans have always been more temperamentally anti-statist than Europeans (not to speak of Asians). But anti-statism is not the same thing as anti-communitarianism.

*For a fuller discussion of China's political condition, see "Deterring China" by Arthur Waldron, beginning on p. 17.—ED.

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The modern hierarchical business organization was, after all, pioneered in the United States. And that is no surprise, for the peculiar American genius has always been for organizing things, from quilting bees and barn-raisings to General Electric and Little League. Moreover, America's historic accomplishment was to create a rich associational life among ethnically, religiously, and, latterly, racially diverse peoples. It was the dynamic interplay between individualistic and communitarian tendencies that produced a society skilled in what Tocqueville called the "art of association."

But America's social assets, Fukuyama warns, are now declining: "Just as its savings rate has been too low to replace physical plant and infrastructure adequately, so [the American] replenishment of social capital has lagged in recent decades." Today's cultural crisis is thus a crisis of trust, caused by the breakdown of mediating institutions under the combined assault of an absolutist individualism (the philosophy of the imperial autonomous Self), on the one hand, and the nanny state, on the other. America, in short, is suffering, from a "vanishing middle."

Why have the voluntary associations of the "middle" begun to erode? In part because of the forces of "creative destruction" which the economist Joseph Schumpeter correctly defined as intrinsic to capitalism. But as Fukuyama notes, creative destruction has been going on from the beginning of American society. Moreover, capitalist dynamism can *create* communities as well as destroy them:

> During the so-called "decade of greed" of the 1980's, when some American corporations were ruthlessly laying off workers and undermining communities, many other American corporations were simultaneously introducing lean production, work teams, incentive systems requiring evaluation in small groups, quality circles, and a host of other workplace innovations. The aim of these innovations was to break down the walls of isolation created by the . . . mass-production factory and the job-control unionism it had spawned. The enterprises that submitted to the logic of these changes became simultaneously more productive and more community-oriented.

No, the root causes of the "vanishing middle" must lie elsewhere. Fukuyama identifies them as follows: liberal reform policies that (deliberately or unintentionally) broke up poor inner-city communities; the expansion of the welfare state and of the rewards it gives to behaviors that lead to the collapse of family structures; and, perhaps most importantly, the rise of a "rights" culture which "dignifies with high moral purpose what often amounts to low private interests or desires."

How might Americans begin to go about recreating the "middle" and replenishing our fund of social capital? Fukuyama has a number of specific suggestions, touching particularly on issues of civic education; but his basic point is that no such reconstruction is possible on libertarian premises. Yes, the government must be gotten out of the way, for government can rarely repair what it has destroyed (like the urban underclass family). But there are authorities other than the government to which Americans have traditionally bound themselves. And that "ability to obey communal authority," Fukuyama argues, has been and remains the "key to the success" of American society.

FUKUYAMA'S empirical and cross-cultural studies lead to what liberals (in both the old-fashioned and post-60's senses of the term) may regard as a paradoxical conclusion: if you universalize liberal individualism, extending its premises to all spheres of life, liberal institutions (including the market) will eventually malfunction, and then liberal democratic society will itself decay. Self-government cannot endure without self-restraint on the part of citizens, any more than the market can endure without deferred gratification on the part of investors and consumers. Untethered from other moral goods, liberty deteriorates into license; liberty must be transformed into ordered liberty, and the most effective engine for doing that is a citizenry regulating itself from within according to a shared public "language of good and evil."

Such is Francis Fukuyama's "take" on life after history, and it seems to me a persuasive reading of the circumstances of new and old democracies alike. In at least one direction, however, Fukuyama's argument might be pushed farther.

Postulating the "end of history" in 1989, Fukuyama was rather tone-deaf to religion as a factor in "post-historical" society. Now, he seems to have developed an appreciation for the social utility of religious conviction, citing historian William H. McNeill to the effect that "moral communities of fellow believers are necessary for social well-being." Religion, in this view, ought not be too public or too assertive; but a strong argument can be made for "tolerance of religion as a source of culture."

But this seems at once too indulgent of the elite culture's allergy to public religion and—more important—insufficiently appreciative of the crucial role that religious conviction plays in legitimating the institutions of American democracy today. If the key variable in successful modern societies is their level of generalized social trust, and if that trust is built on a foundation of common moral norms (or a common "language of good and evil"), then it is self-defeating in the American context to declare the primary source of those norms—namely, biblical religion—unfit for public consumption. Fukuyama rightly points out that disestablishment has been very good for religion in America. But when disestablishment means the installation of state-mandated secularism as a national ideology, further damage is wrought to that "middle" which has been the

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moral-cultural strength of the American experiment.

The liberal democratic experiment depends for an account of its validity on understandings that it does not itself generate; democracy cannot legitimate itself by itself. And as Fukuyama writes, the linchpin of the whole legitimating enterprise is the building of trust around common norms. Those norms, he continues, "can be about deep 'value' questions like the nature of God or justice, but they also encompass secular norms like professional standards and codes of behavior." The latter surely have their place in the free society. But it seems plain to this observer, at least, that common understandings of the nature of God and justice provide a more secure foundation for trust than, say, the Hippocratic Oath or the code of conduct of the Washington, D.C. bar association.

Beyond the question of religion's utility there is also the not-inconsequential matter of truth. The moral truths about the human person on which liberal democracy has been based are now under assault from East Asian autocrats, Islamic activists, the world's remaining Communists, and Western academic deconstructionists and multiculturalists.* Some of the critics argue that these moral claims are, in fact, false; others, that Jefferson's "self-evident truths" may be true for Americans, but not necessarily for everyone else. From either direction, though, the challenge is basic and the stakes are very high. For to concede either of these arguments is to leave the field to a moral relativism that is ultimately corrosive of social trust and, eventually, of the democratic experiment.

This is not to say that an explicitly Judeo-Christian account of the democratic prospect is the only possible vehicle for publicly addressing America's crisis of trust. Indeed, given the enduring plurality (not to mention feistiness) of America's religious communities and the requirements of a legitimate "disestablishmentarianism," the best goal would seem to be what the Catholic thinker John Courtney Murray used to describe as a "religiously-informed public philosophy": a public language of good and evil shaped by biblical understandings, but translated into an ecumenical and interreligious discourse.

In any event, the replenishment of American social capital in what Gertrude Himmelfarb has called the "remoralization of society" is unlikely to happen if the public role of religious conviction is reduced to merely functional terms. Life after history will have to engage not only questions of good and evil, but questions of truth and falsehood. And it will have to engage them in ways that strengthen rather than shred the fabric of democratic civility. Which is to say that life after history will be anything but dull.

*See my article, "Are Human Rights Still Universal?," COMMENTARY, January 1995.

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The Jewish Voice

Robert Alter

IT HAS been frequently observed, by both philo-Semites and anti-Semites, that the numbers of Jews participating in the various fields of intellectual life are out of all proportion to the numbers of Jews in the general population. This is a statistical reality that can hardly be denied. In the United States, for example, though Jews are rather less than 2 percent of the population, if one looks to areas of activity such as journalism and criticism, or scientific research, or academic disciplines like mathematics, history, sociology, and English literature, a fourth or a third or sometimes more than half the leaders in the field can turn out to be Jews.

The most plausible reason for this disproportionate representation is, I believe, sociocultural. But it should be emphasized at the outset that the large number of Jews in intellectual endeavors does not automatically translate into a decisive Jewish *influence* on intellectual life. For good sociological cause, many Jews have flowed into the intellectual professions; but the purported dominance of Jews in intellectual life proves in many key instances to be a mirage.

Take, for example, the intellectual trinity of Marx, Freud, and Einstein, so often invoked as evidence that Jews have been the trailblazers of modern innovative thought. Marx was a baptized Christian with a very nasty streak of anti-Semitism. To enlist him as a Jewish thinker is to succumb to a kind of Nuremberg-law mentality about intellectual history, whereby anyone with at least one Jewish grandfather is imagined somehow to perpetuate a Jewish genetic legacy, or even a unique Jewish "vision" of the world.

As for Einstein, whose very name has become a popular synonym for genius, his contributions to changing our understanding of the physical universe are hardly in doubt, but the fact remains that the majority of the important theoretical physicists in this century—Heisenberg, Planck, Lawrence, and so forth—have not been Jews. Incidentally, the illusory nature of Jewish dominance is even more evident in other fields, where the rule seems to be that there are a few achievements of the first order by Jews but it is others who predominate. In painting, for example, a Jewish apologist might proudly cite Chagall, Soutine, and Modigliani, but none of these, luminous as his work may be, reaches the level of Cézanne, Picasso, and Matisse.

This leaves us, from the modern big three, with Freud, who is a special case. There is no question that Jews have largely dominated psychoanalytic theory (and practice) ever since Freud invented it nearly a century ago. Freud himself was notoriously nervous that psychoanalysis would be perceived as a "Jewish science," and that was a chief motive for his eagerness in acquiring Jung as a disciple. Freud's last work, *Moses and Monotheism,* is in fact a kind of inadvertent admission that the psychoanalytic world view is grounded in what he conceives to be a specifically Jewish historical experience.

Whether the procedures and assumptions of psychoanalysis are in fact somehow distinctively Jewish is still a matter of lively debate. It is a Jewish science at least in this sense: it was invented by a Jew, and it has flourished in social circles that have been by and large Jewish. To put it in other words, the dominance of Jews in psychoanalysis is predicated on the fact that, like the film industry, it was a *new* area of cultural endeavor where there were no existing elites and no background of longstanding appeal to other groups in the general population.

I am not, of course, minimizing the extraordinary explosion of creative energies that followed the entrance of Jews by uneven stages into the general culture of the West after their emancipation. But the notion that it has been chiefly the Jews who have determined the direction of modern thought and cultural creativity is wildly exaggerated.

SIMILARLY misguided is the idea, again very widely held, that there is a common denominator shared by Jewish intellectuals, from Lithuania to Los Angeles, which fixes their trajectory in modern culture, whatever

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their areas of activity. I strongly suspect that this habit of thinking goes back to 19th-century notions of a national genius possessed by each individual people. Thus, it is claimed that the Jews, with their legacy of messianic traditions, are uniquely preoccupied with the idea of redemption—in fact, a central motif in *Christian* thought through the ages—and consequently that redemption is the key to the work of every real or imagined Jewish thinker from Marx to Freud to the German-Jewish intellectual Walter Benjamin.

A less sanguine line of commentators prefers to see the unique realm of the Jewish moral imagination as exile and alienation. In this view, the Jewish genius consists in the insistence that we are never really at home in the world, and thus in a refusal to acquiesce in the received terms of reality. The pantheon illustrating this purported wisdom of ontological exile inevitably begins with Franz Kafka, again invokes Benjamin, and in the hands of some analysts can end with such unlikely contemporaries as the French theorist Jacques Derrida and the American literary critic Harold Bloom.

Still others have been disposed to attribute indiscriminately to sundry Jewish thinkers a "talmudic subtlety" of dialectic reasoning, even when the writer in question has been separated by a buffer of three generations from any acquaintance with talmudic learning. Nor does this exhaust the list of supposedly Jewish mental traits. Freud himself thought of the Jews as uniquely committed to instinctual renunciation and intellectual labor. And even a writer as minutely familiar with the variegated world of Jewish culture as the influential turn-of-the-century Hebrew essayist, Ahad Ha-am, could claim that the unique defining feature of the Jewish people, and the ultimate source of its long historical persistence, was the ethical imperative.

For Ahad Ha-am, one could at least offer the excuse of closeness in time to Romantic ideologies of national identity. But all these arguments for a grand formula to explain a supposed Jewish impulse in culture are schematic, tendentious, and, at least implicitly, ideological. Compared with other groups, the Jews have never had a monopoly on redemption, alienation, ethics, analytic subtlety, God-intoxication, or anything else. Moreover, viewed in itself, traditional Jewish culture was multifaceted, heterogeneous, historically evolving; and the millions who in the modern world left it for the general culture exhibited the widest spectrum of relations both to their own antecedents and to the new world in which they became so energetically engaged.

YET the sheer vehemence of those energies deserves some reflection. When Jews began to move out of *shtetl* and ghetto, whether or not they also broke with all religious observance, they were powerfully impelled by a new horizon of economic, social, and cultural possibilities. They would no longer have to submit to the coercion of rabbinic authorities and *parnasim*, the mercantile oligarchs who dominated the traditional communities. New realms of cultural experience were opened to them (although the social realm often remained more restrictive). Instead of the limited range of vocational possibilities offered by *shtetl* life, many barely a notch above subsistence level, they could envisage entry into the trained professions with the promise of a secure economic future—indeed, with all the amenities of high bourgeois existence.

As we are reminded by patterns followed in the great East European Jewish immigration to the United States, it was very common, at least in the first generation of life in the new society, to follow the path of commerce. This is hardly surprising in light of the importance of trade in older Jewish societies. But even in the first generation, and dramatically in the second, Westernizing Jews turned to higher education, entering professions like law and medicine and, in due course, the academic world as well. This happened, I think, not because Jews were smarter than other people but rather because of a general orientation in the society from which the parents and grandparents of the new Jewish intelligentsia had come.

East European Jewry lived in a largely impoverished society where male literacy was nevertheless nearly universal and female literacy (in Yiddish though not Hebrew) was also very extensive. In a pragmatic reinterpretation of the folk saying, *toyre iz di beste skhoyre*—"learning is the best merchandise"—it was generally recognized that intellectual achievement (again, for males) was a very effective means of upward mobility. A wretched peddler's son who could demonstrate his brilliance as a talmudist might hope for the hand of a rich merchant's daughter, several years of full-time study supported by his father-in-law, and a life of material ease.

This is not to say that learning lacked its own intellectual excitement or spiritual motivation. But the practical consequence of the traditional rabbinic centering of religious life on the study of the Law was a society that made intellectual achievement a chief avenue of social advancement. It was entirely natural, then, that the refugees from and descendants of this very society would in inordinate numbers envisage a discipline of learning and intellectual labor as the most congenial means to make their way in the new open societies into which they moved.

This background of social history is useful to keep in mind because it points to the fact that the entrance of Jews into Western intellectual life was neither unique—in some ways, the new prominence of the children of Asian immigrants in American universities reflects similar cultural

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antecedents—nor somehow mysterious and metaphysical. Still, it would be an excess of skepticism to claim that Jews have behaved in the intellectual world precisely like everyone else. There has been no single grand pattern, but there have been a few characteristic patterns, reflecting in different ways the distinctive background and cultural predicament of people in transition from a Jewish world to a Western one.

LET me try to identify three clusters of such recurring traits, working within the bias of my own concerns as a literary critic and limiting my examples to writers of fiction.

Many important Jewish writers over the past hundred years, including quite a few who wrote in Yiddish or Hebrew, have drawn much of the sharpness of their perception of historical process and contemporary reality from their own uneasy movement between two cultures. In this, of course, they resemble writers and artists from other ethnic minorities or immigrant groups in the throes of an enveloping and often painful process of acculturation, though their expression of this predicament has a distinctive Jewish coloration.

One brilliant literary reflection of this confrontation is *Red Cavalry* (1926), one of the enduring collections of short stories of this century. Its author, Isaac Babel, was born in Odessa in 1894, and had campaigned in Galicia with the Red Army in 1920. These Russian stories, based on Babel's army experience, finely etch both the splendid savagery of the Cossack troops fighting for the revolutionary cause and the pathos of a decaying Galician Orthodox Jewry laid waste by war and historical change.* Within a few years, Babel's poised ambivalences would cause him political grief under the Soviets. By the mid-30's he fell silent; in 1939 he was arrested, and he perished in the gulag two years later.

The two-way pull Babel felt—between the alien ethos of liberating violence and fierce beauty embodied by the Cossacks and the melancholy spiritual poignancy of a Galician Jewry whose values he could elegize but not embrace—has often been noted, perhaps most luminously by the critic Lionel Trilling in a 1955 essay in COMMENTARY.† What seems to me particularly compelling in the imaginative texture of the stories is not just the confrontation between Judaism and the Revolution, the old era and the new, but also the artistic vehicle through which this confrontation is effected.

Before any clash of values between Marx and Maimonides, Babel as a writer had deeply assimilated Flaubert. As a consequence, his account of the anguish of 20th-century history is a pervasively *aestheticized* one: Babel's thoroughly European modernity is reflected in his underlying assumption that the world is, above all, an occasion for aesthetic transformation (hardly a notion that would have occurred to his Jewish forebears). His battle scenes are full of highly wrought imagery, devised to catch the eye and shake preconceptions as violence is transmuted into art.

Here, for example, is a sunset scene as the cavalry rides over a blood-soaked field: "The orange sun rolled down the sky like a lopped-off head." An artillery barrage: "Fires rose obediently on the horizon, and the heavy birds of the shelling flew up out of the flames." The Cossack horsemen: "Raising a shout, the men moved on . . . , and pale steel gleamed in the ichor of the autumnal sun."

If this sort of elevation of the aesthetic is itself a new cultural orientation for a Jew, Babel also seems to assume something else: that beautifully wrought expression is a way of bringing the world into focus, a means of making the reader see concretely what is at stake in the play of historical forces. "The Rabbi's Son," the penultimate story of *Red Cavalry*, is particularly memorable in this respect. The narrator comes across a certain Elijah, son of the rabbi of Zhitomir, who has been mortally wounded in battle, fighting for the Revolution. Turning his eyes from Elijah's maimed, half-naked body, he considers the boy's belongings:

> His things were strewn about pell-mell—mandates of the propagandist and notebooks of the Jewish poet, the portraits of Lenin and Maimonides lay side by side, the knotted iron of Lenin's skull beside the dull silk of the portrait of Maimonides. A lock of a woman's hair lay in a book, the resolutions of the party's Sixth Congress, and the margins of Communist leaflets were crowded with crooked lines of ancient Hebrew verse. They fell upon me in a mean and depressing rain—pages of the Song of Songs and revolver cartridges.

In rhetorical terms, one could say that oxymoron is the central figure of the whole modern Jewish literature of transition—the juxtaposition of contradictory elements taken from mutually exclusive realms. One finds more diffuse expressions of this in writers as different as Babel's Hebrew contemporary, M.D. Berdichevsky, and the American Henry Roth, now in old age publishing the volumes of his autobiographical novel. In the passage before us, the overall effect of Babel's finely worked prose is, I think, paradoxical, and paradoxical in a way that ends by being exemplary.

The artist's eye that chooses the paired items—the iron Lenin, the silken Maimonides, and the two cultural orders for which they stand—extracts

*The diary Babel kept in 1920, which is a vividly illuminating document, has recently been published by Yale University Press (edited by Carol J. Avins, 126 pp., $20.00).

†Cynthia Ozick, however, in a review of the *1920 Diary* (*New Republic*, May 8, 1995), has noted that in light of what we now know about Babel, Trilling made some erroneous assumptions about what kind of Jew Babel was.

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from the clash of eras and values what William Butler Yeats, writing just a few years earlier, and of another revolution, called "a terrible beauty." But the details Babel selects also provide an unwaveringly sharp focus on a historical moment he himself is uniquely advantaged to see as a Jew in violent transition between two realms. Neither sentimentalizing the old, nor naively surrendering to the seductions of the new, Babel achieves a sense of rightness as his narrator takes in the contradictory possessions of the dying Communist *hasid* under a "mean and depressing rain" in the bleak light of sunset. What we are left with is a sense of two worlds divided by an unbridgeable chasm, the Jewish past suffused with a delicate beauty now antiquated or irrelevant, and the revolutionary present, perhaps with its excitements but also with its inexorable new lexicon of destruction and fear.

If Babel is representative of one large strain in modern Jewish literature, another is represented by writers who do not so much register the pangs of transition as tap the expressive resources of Jewish culture. Many of these writers have drawn upon the tonalities and rhetorical devices of vernacular Jewish culture, while some—especially, but not exclusively, those writing in Hebrew and Yiddish—have found ways to engage the concerns and thought categories of the classical tradition. Of the latter group, Franz Kafka is the most powerful as well as the most peculiar instance.

Kafka is at once an exemplary writer and one of a kind, a figure others have tried to assimilate and imitate without notable success. His name has become a byword for the modern literature of alienation, disjunction, and bafflement; the adjective "Kafkaesque" has passed into the usage of the weekly newsmagazines. Yet no other writer really reads like Kafka. I suspect that there may be several reasons for this anomaly, but the one I want to consider here is the uncanny fusion of Kafka's modernism and his Jewishness.

The modernist features of his stories and novels are evident enough: the subversion of traditional assumptions about causality and the concomitant breakdown of linear narrative; the irruption of fantasy and the surreal into the represented world; the displacement of realism by parable; the probing of the foundations of epistemology and ontology, haunted by the fear that the world may be indecipherable. One can detect similar impulses in a whole range of 20th-century writers, from Jorge Luis Borges to Guenter Grass, but what makes Kafka distinctive is that he works out this modernist project by constantly interrogating three central categories of classical Jewish thought: revelation, law, and interpretation.

Kafka, we need to remind ourselves, was an assimilated German-speaking Jew who came to his interest in Judaism rather late in his short and painful life. His businessman father had sloughed off most religious observance as well as his native Yiddish when he moved to Prague from the *shtetl* where he had grown up, and Franz's first serious encounter with Jewish culture did not occur until late 1911 (he was then twenty-eight) when a traveling Yiddish theater troupe came to Prague. He would subsequently pursue readings in Jewish history and begin to explore classical Jewish texts, and in the last six years of his life, beginning in 1918, he would make a sustained effort to acquire a competence in Hebrew. By 1911, however, he had already given shape to his distinctive stance as a writer of fiction, and with regard to the theological triad I have mentioned, it was a Jewish stance, even before the fact of his actual involvement in Jewish culture.

Gershom Scholem, the great scholar of Jewish mysticism, who possessed a unique authority to make such judgments, repeatedly spoke of Kafka as a heretical or secular kabbalist; Scholem once even quoted a parable by an 18th-century anti-nomian mystic to show that it could easily have been written by Kafka. And Kafka himself, in a diary entry late in his life, speculated that his writing, which he represented metaphorically as an assault on the realm above, might, under other circumstances, have become a new Kabbalah.

It is by no means clear how or why such a spiritual kinship could have occurred. Though I find it easy enough to imagine that a Kafka born half a millennium earlier in Spain or along the Rhine would have made an excellent kabbalist or Hebrew exegete, the disposition to these vocations is surely not part of a genetic code. And so I am driven to the uneasy conjecture that certain fundamental aspects of traditional Jewish culture continue to live a kind of ghostly afterlife among Jews in the process of assimilating into a different culture.

There is ample evidence, for instance, that Kafka was inclined to see the imperious authoritarianism of his father as a living enactment of the awesome imposition of a regimen of commandments, a revelation of binding law without the underwriting of a divine lawgiver. In his writing, he would ponder again and again the imperative authority of the law, its possible arbitrariness, the necessity of constant interpretation it imposed, the impossibility of living without it. These are compellingly Jewish concerns: it seems as though a few rare sensibilities, like Kafka's, by the very act of contemplating certain central *ideas* of Jewish tradition from a distance—even an estranged distance—are capable of replicating their inner dynamic, of reassimilating them. And so Kafka the Germanophone Czech ended up creating at least a few texts that sound as though they could have been invented by an 18th-century Polish Jewish mystic, or even by a creator of rabbinic Midrash in 5th-century Palestine.

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HERE is a very short Kafka text—25 words in the German—which I would construe as a microscopic but thoroughly characteristic manifestation of this Jewish peculiarity that pervades Kafka's work and that also has implications for Jewish writers who do not otherwise resemble him. The text is entitled "The Pit of Babel" (the biblical Babel, that is), though the German *Schacht* also means "shaft," as in a mine:

> What are you building?—I want to dig a passage. Some progress must be made. My station up there is much too high.
> We are digging the pit of Babel.

The first thing that should be said about this bizarre little dialogue is that it is funny; not the least of Kafka's inimitable traits is his ability to combine a species of comedy that is variously farcical, grotesque, or nervous with the greatest spiritual intentness. Whether this marriage of humor and theology is a distinctively Jewish practice I am not sure, but Walter Benjamin, thinking of both Kafka and the Kabbalah, once suggested this might be so. At least it can be said that the Jewish fondness for approaching theological issues through narrative vehicles lends itself to this sort of paradoxical union.

"The Pit of Babel" is a neat polar reversal of the story in Genesis 11, with mine shaft substituted for tower, down for up. But why should Kafka have bothered to invent this reversal? What seems to me most intriguing about the parable is its status as a meditation on a canonical text which implicitly concedes the authority of that text. It is precisely on the presumption of such authority that the sundry varieties of Judaism ever since the Bible have been built. The Jewish approach to truth, for better or for worse, has been decisively focused on textuality (rather than, say, on empirical investigation). As a famous rabbinic formula about the Torah succinctly puts it: "Turn it over and turn it over, for everything is in it."

No modern writer has absorbed this idea more profoundly than Kafka, who weaves it into the texture of his narrative prose and dialogues and the frame of his plots. In "The Pit of Babel," the story from Genesis looms before the writer like the tower at its center, demanding that he confront it. It is a story that fascinated Kafka and one to which he returned several times. He broods over it as a post-traditional traditionalist. From the reduced existential perspective of this 20th-century writer, the grandiosity, the sheer overweening ambition, of the builders of the legendary tower is no longer conceivable. But the underlying idea of the biblical story is that man through his imperative nature cannot simply sit still: at all costs, progress, *Fortschritt*, must be made. And so, if the project of human transcendence, of scaling heaven, is no longer really imaginable, men may fling themselves into a mirror-image project of attaining what the critic Erich Heller called "negative transcendence."

The cryptic text leaves entirely open whether the downward drive is merely an act of crazy futility, digging a shaft into nothing in particular with the sole justification of movement; or the achievement through bizarre means of a sense of fulfillment; or a penetration into a netherworld of dark forces; or a burrowing (as elsewhere in Kafka) into hiddenness and safety from the dangers of the realm above. In any event, the imagination of man and world in this elegantly minuscule parable is teased out of a pondering of a canonical text, and in more diffuse forms, this is true throughout Kafka's work. No other modern writer, including those composing in Hebrew, has so pervasively annealed exegesis with narration, though in a wide variety of ways Jewish thinkers and writers in the modern era, from Freud and Emile Durkheim to the Hebrew novelist S.Y. Agnon, have shown themselves to be peculiarly fascinated with textuality and caught up in interpretation as the grand avenue to knowledge.

THE third and most widespread pattern of distinctiveness exhibited by writers with antecedents in the culture of *Yiddishkeit* is a cluster of characteristic speech habits: a certain caustically ironic tonality; a fondness for exuberant shuttling among disparate layers of diction in a language; a predisposition to turn written language into quasi-oral performance, art into *shtick*, the verbal pyrotechnics of a part into a substitute for any coherently continuous whole. Behind these speech habits stands the oral culture of Yiddish, with its delight in verbal performance and the resourceful awareness in its speakers of the disparate constituents of the language; and this culture in turn is at least partly informed by the Hebrew and Aramaic texts from late antiquity and the Middle Ages that were the fixed syllabus for the male population.

This general relation to language and discursive form is observable in writers of East European birth using one of the two languages of the culture—in Yiddish, Mendele Mokher Seforim (S.Y. Abramovitch), Sholem Aleichem, Itzik Manger, and many others; in Hebrew, Agnon, his contemporary Haim Hazaz, and many lesser lights. It is observable as well in American writers like Saul Bellow and Philip Roth, at one or two generations' remove from *shtetl* life, and its impetus also drives a good deal of Jewish stand-up comedy in the American idiom. There is no better evidence than this for the contention made several decades back by the Israeli critic Dov Sadan that modern Jewish writing constitutes a single trilingual literature, with branches in Yiddish, in Hebrew, and in one or another Western language.

Benjamin Harshav, the author of a superb study of the semiotics of Yiddish culture, has beautifully summarized the characteristics of this distinctive mode of "Jewish discourse":

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> [L]oquaciousness, contentiousness, oppositionalism, associativeness; answering an argument through example, anecdote, parable, or counter-question; a worrying-away at the meanings, connotations, and associations of every word or fact; seeing every little detail as symbolic of a universal problem; and the leap from a word or concrete detail to abstract generalization and theorizing. The basic principle is that what advances the discourse is not logical or narrative continuity but the totality of the represented world.

Harshav goes on to make the intriguing suggestion that Freud founded psychoanalysis on just this sort of extravagant Jewish attention to detail, which is then dislocated and radically recontextualized by the energy of interpretation. In any case, it is remarkable how many Jewish writers, some steeped in the ancestral world, others with no more than wisps of memory of it, variously carry out this project of displacing the axis of fiction from narrative to language, from event to verbal performance.

Let me illustrate this tendency from texts in two different languages a century apart.

My first example (in my own translation) is a few lines from the opening section of "The Burnt-Out Ones," a story by Mendele written in the 1890's and one of the few he composed originally in Hebrew rather than Yiddish. It is Lag ba-Omer, the only day in the seven weeks between Passover and Shavuot when Jews are permitted to have weddings and other joyful events. Mendele, the narrator-bookseller, is ambling alongside his horse and wagon:

> And so I lift up my feet and walk along, looking at lovely tree and lovely field, at the grasses and the vegetables and the produce of the field. The mandrakes give off their scent, and the winged creatures chirp melodiously to me, and I listen and imagine in my thoughts the fiddle and the drum, the flute and the trumpet, the clarinet and the cymbal, all the instruments that are resounding and playing today for brides and grooms in our streets, throughout the Pale of Settlement.

This is really a performance masquerading as a description. Nothing in the scene is actually focused, only the narrator's mood in responding to the scene, or, more specifically, his play with language in responding to it. The Hebrew, a generation before the language again became a vernacular, is given the vitality of a spoken language because Mendele extrudes its heteroglot character, making it analogous to the heteroglossia of Yiddish with its Germanic, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Slavic components.

The narrator looks at a highly unspecific "lovely tree and lovely field" because he remembers the injunction in *The Sayings of the Fathers*, "He who walks on the way and says, 'How lovely is this tree, how lovely is this field,' incurs mortal guilt." This recollection-through-reversal of a dour rabbinic pronouncement is then conjoined with a lyric citation from the Song of Songs, "The mandrakes give off their scent." This, in turn, as Mendele's imaginings move from nature to the Jewish street, is confronted with the catalogue of *klezmer* instruments, featuring vernacular-sounding loan words like *tzimbil*, cymbal, and *pandura*, actually a Greek word that means syrinx or shepherd's flute in the Talmud but which I would guess is used in this context by Mendele for a clarinet.

A moment later in the story, in a shift of levels that is thematic as well as stylistic, the revery of melodious celebration will be broken into by the appearance of a band of wretched refugees, "staff in hand and pack on shoulder," from a burnt-out *shtetl*. But the story is anyway only a loose frame, while the real interest lies in the inventive activity of a linguistic virtuoso ringing the changes on the Hebrew language. Meaning, vision, and readerly pleasure are all realized not through the concatenation of narrative or through any sustained discursive argument but in the flash of verbal detail, the inventive orchestration of the different strata of the language with their different textures, associations, and value systems.

Now let us look at three characteristic sentences from a distant literary descendant of Mendele's, Philip Roth. In *Operation Shylock* (1993), the narrator, who shares the name and essential biography of Philip Roth, is baffled by his encounter in Jerusalem with a charlatan who is a dead ringer for him, and who calls himself Philip Roth. Here is the narrator reflecting on the sexy mistress of the other Philip Roth when she comes to see him at his hotel:

> And I wanted to hear her talk because of the beguilingly ambiguous timbre of her voice, which was harmonically a puzzle to me. The voice was like something you've gotten out of the freezer that's taking its own sweet time to thaw: moist and spongy enough at the edges to eat, otherwise off-puttingly refrigerated down to its deep-frozen core. It was difficult to tell just how coarse she was, if there was a great deal going on in her or if maybe there was nothing at all and she was just a petty criminal's obedient moll.

Roth's language of course cannot have the historical range of Mendele's, but he, too, gets some of his liveliest effects by playing one linguistic register against another. The language of the first sentence is decorously literary and finely poised in the effort of making discriminations ("beguilingly ambiguous timbre," "harmonically a puzzle"). Then Roth switches to a colloquial register ("like something you've gotten out of the freezer that's taking its own sweet time to thaw"), and flaunts the comic incongruity of the image: a

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voice as a frozen cake. At the same time, there is a kind of wit in the deliberately grotesque simile, for the narrator evinces an exploratory sexual interest in the woman—the cake is associated with appetite, and taking its own sweet time to thaw comically intimates resistance or frigidity.

The woman in question, however, is not *realized* as a character, in the way that Flaubert or—very differently—Henry James would do. What comes across instead is the narrator's verbal performance, the zest and zaniness with which he zeroes in on her voice, converting it into a cake that is moist and spongy at the edges but may have a deep-frozen core. Both the strength and the weakness of this passage, and much of Roth's writing as far back as *Portnoy's Complaint* (1968), are in the energy of its verbal improvisations; so that instead of character, event, and moral or conceptual development, we get a series of *shtiklach*, the best of them displaying stylistic and attitudinal fireworks, many bearing the signs of self-indulgence.

THIS variegated story of Jews engaging the models of Western culture surely suggests no single edifying moral. Indeed, my last pair of examples may lead one to wonder whether in some instances Jews may have made themselves masters of what might amount to minor veins in the general culture. But if one grants that the sustaining power of an increasingly international culture abides in its capacity to accommodate different perspectives, Jewish writers, in all the variety of their sundry relations to their own antecedents, have added palpably to the richness of the whole. Modern literature would surely be diminished without the humane, unblinking comedy of Sholem Aleichem—enacted through the most wittily resourceful deployment of "Jewish discourse"—or without Kafka's theologically intense fables of the commentator's despair, or even without the wisecracking, street-smart, wryly reflective narrators of Saul Bellow's novels, so peculiarly given to metaphysical musings.

It seems reasonable to assume that these different freights of consciousness carried by Jews from their own cultural sphere into modernity are a transitional phenomenon, the hallmark of writers acclimating themselves in one world while still variously remembering another. What may be a little surprising is that such traits of transition should exhibit so great a persistence. It is odd, and instructive, that a third-generation American like Philip Roth, who knows only fragments of Yiddish, should have absorbed some of the tonalities and discursive strategies of the Yiddish-speaking ancestral world, or that a native Israeli writer like the talented Meir Shalev, a generation younger than Roth, should be able to create a fictional world where the magic-realist fantastication of Gabriel Garcia-Marquez and Italo Calvino rubs shoulders with the ghost of Sholem Aleichem.

Jews have added if not a dominant then a distinctive voice to the mixed chorus of modern culture. And at least in the area of literary expression, it seems as though there are still writers, including some younger ones, who find the distinctiveness well worth preserving.

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Charity Begins at School

Chester E. Finn, Jr. and Gregg Vanourek

In 1989, with much fanfare, President Bush convened the nation's governors in Charlottesville, Virginia for a summit meeting on our educational woes. The primary accomplishment of the gathering was agreement on six broad goals to be achieved by century's end, goals that became the foundation of Bush's *America 2000* school-reform strategy and, in altered form, of President Clinton's controversial *Goals 2000* program.

Tucked away in the sweeping language of the document which emerged some months later from the Charlottesville gathering were some highly specific objectives, one of which promised that by the year 2000 "[a]ll students will be involved in activities that promote and demonstrate good citizenship, community service, and personal responsibility." In plain words, America's children would be expected to work as volunteers in programs organized by their schools.

Though this was the first time that mandatory volunteer work—an oxymoron known variously in the field as "experiential education," "character education," "community service," and, most frequently, "service learning"—received the federal government's stamp of approval, support for it had long been growing among professional educators as a way to tie textbook learning to the "real world," while strengthening character by imbuing students with the habit of serving others.

The increasing appeal of service learning appears to have arisen from the convergence of several familiar streams. Perhaps the oldest of these is the belief, stretching back to the Founders, and beyond them to Aristotle, that preparing the next generation for citizenship is a vital mission of any democratic society and that schools should habituate their students to what Benjamin Franklin termed the "publick religion."

This ancient and respectable idea has merged, in modern times, with the seemingly ineradicable conviction that the schools have an obligation to "build a new social order" (in the words of a once-prominent "progressive" educator, George S. Counts, writing in 1932). Educators of this persuasion place far less emphasis on "academic" knowledge and the acquisition of basic skills than on arming the young with "critical thinking skills" and affording them opportunities to right society's wrongs.

Still a third stream is the by-now well-established American practice of channeling idealism via government-sponsored volunteer programs like VISTA and the Peace Corps. If volunteering is a good thing, goes the reasoning of those who advocate such initiatives, it will be even better if government encourages, shapes, and subsidizes it.

With each of these strands playing its respective part, Bush was hardly making a radical departure in Charlottesville. Already in his 1988 campaign for the presidency, he had praised Americans who freely gave of their time and energy to good causes as "a thousand points of light." Once in the White House, he set various governmental bodies in motion to promote voluntarism across the land, including in primary and secondary schools.

After Bush's defeat in 1992, Clinton picked up where his predecessor had left off. He began his tenure in office by speaking eagerly of a Citizens Corps, with college-tuition aid offered to those who enlisted. A trial project was launched: a federally-funded "summer of service" that put some 1,500 young adults to work. By the autumn of 1993 the White House duly pronounced the trial a success, and by winter a new government body, the Corporation for National and Community Service, was created to extend the "summer of service" into a year-'round affair involving not only higher education but primary and secondary schools as well. By this time the focus had shifted from voluntary to compulsory, and President Clinton was declaring: "[I]t is a very good thing for the states or local school districts to mandate community service for kids. . . . I think that every state should include community service as part of the curriculum."

And so it has been. Programs mandating volunteer work (some of which antedate the federal initiatives, having percolated from the grassroots up) are now under way across the land. According to a 1994 survey, 37 percent of U.S. high schools are either operating or planning programs in which students are "required to perform a specific number of hours of community service in order to graduate." Another 1994 report shows that 44 percent of high-school seniors had engaged in community service within the previous two years.

Of course, for those committed to the goal that *all* students be so engaged, participation rates of less than half are a poor showing. The advocates, accordingly, are redoubling their efforts. One powerful instrument at their disposal has been the 1994 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. (The Act allocates the lion's share of federal school aid.) This 1,200-page measure contains nearly twenty separate programs encouraging or underwriting "service learning." With the

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federal government vigorously pressing ahead, and with only five years remaining before *Goals 2000*'s target of universal participation is achieved, it seems an appropriate time to pause and ask precisely what is going on here.

ONE way to approach this question is to look at Maryland, a state that has been in the vanguard of the trend, and that now boasts the only *statewide* service-learning requirement in the nation. In 1985, Maryland's board of education mandated that all school systems offer elective courses and programs involving volunteer work and community service. Seven years later, and over objections by all but two of its 24 county-school systems, Maryland made volunteer work a requirement for students before graduation from high school. Today, an elaborate service-learning infrastructure is in place across the state.

In some Maryland schools it is difficult to distinguish service learning from ordinary classroom activity. Local school systems can opt to award service-learning credit for certain kinds of class projects. Thus, according to a recent state report, students in a seventh-grade language-arts class in Carroll County have met their volunteer-work requirement by "research[ing] disabilities and chronic illnesses . . . and then report[ing] their findings to their classmates." In Prince George's County, students in English classes have satisfied service-learning requirements by "penning letters to sick children or senior citizens in hospitals."

In other locations, the volunteering is somewhat more arduous and must be done outside school. Thus, Baltimore students held "a party for the senior citizens at a nearby nursing home. They prepared the food, made the decorations, organized the entertainment, and conducted the games." In Calvert County, students earned credit by recycling paper, cans, and plastic. In Frederick County, service-learning students "painted 'Chesapeake Bay Drainage' on all of the storm drains surrounding Thomas Johnson High School" to increase "public awareness of local impact on the Bay." Other programs around the state involve fire prevention, food drives for the homeless, and cleaning up old cemeteries.

But in some Maryland communities, students have fulfilled their service requirements by engaging in activities with a more overtly ideological tinge. In Cecil County, for example, they "wrote numerous letters to the county commissioners when the county abolished recycling due to expense." The students "convincingly persuaded the commissioners to continue the project for the environmental benefits, despite the cost to the county." In Harford County, students earned credit by "writing advocacy letters to affect legislation on a seat-belt law for school buses." And in Howard County, eighth graders at Patapsco Middle School kept developers from destroying a historic cemetery.

AS THESE examples suggest, much of what passes for service learning involves political activism. But that should hardly be surprising, because, in the eyes of its advocates, such activism—always, in practice, on the liberal-to-Left end of the political spectrum—is service learning's most desirable form.

The organization that administers Maryland's program of volunteer activities, the Maryland Student Service Alliance (MSSA), has a poster it uses to promote its own good work. This depicts a mountain showing various levels of community service. Halfway up the slope are activities like ladling hot food in a soup kitchen. At the pinnacle lies the loftiest form of voluntarism: lobbying.

MSSA also distributes a service-learning handbook. It sets forth a "progression" of activities from "personal contact" (such as coaching children for the Special Olympics), to "indirect services" (such as recruiting others to a cause), and onward to "advocacy," which in turn ranges from "writing a letter to the editor, to lobbying for a cause, to engaging in a political campaign." When a journalist asked MSSA's current director, Maggie O'Neill, whether her program does not cross the line between community service and political action, she replied with a revealing question of her own: "How would you differentiate between the two?"

The desire to entice children into political activism is hardly limited to Maryland. In fact, it is amply illustrated in prominent guidebooks for educators in the burgeoning learning-by-volunteering field. The premier such text is *Civitas* (1991), a "framework for civic education" produced by the California-based Center for Civic Education. According to its authors, voluntarism will not fulfill its educational promise if students work in private agencies, because these provide "little sense of . . . public policy, or the power relationships of the modern service world." For *Civitas*, volunteer work should be seen less as an opportunity to expose students to homeless shelters and hospitals than as an opportunity to enhance "student competence to monitor and influence public policy in diverse arenas."

Another influential manual in the service-learning field is Ralph Nader's *Civics for Democracy* (1992), published by the Center for Study of Responsive Law. Among its 75 "student-activity ideas" are: "investigate hospitals' Boards of Trustees to determine adequacy of consumer/patient/employee representation"; "survey companies for illegal tax avoidance"; "evaluate toxic and hazardous materials used in school chemistry labs"; and "test [repair shops'] honesty and competence. Follow up with programs to license repair shops or pressure businesses."

This course of study has been greeted enthusiastically in some quarters. Eleanor Smeal, former president of the National Organization for Women, has hailed *Civics for Democracy* as "a textbook that empowers students to become activists and leaders." The writer Studs Terkel predicts that its use will build "far more hip and active citizens." Jesse Jackson has praised the book for recognizing that "people learn in different ways." Some, he continues, "think them-

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selves into a way of acting while others act themselves into a way of thinking. *Civics for Democracy* allows students to do both."

EVEN if school-based volunteer programs steered completely clear of lobbying and politics, which most of them do not, their compulsory nature raises another set of questions. Having an agency of government decide what does and does not qualify as volunteer work is a recipe for conflict; already dissenters have been punished, and court challenges are in the works.

A fourteen-year-old Boy Scout in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, was told, for example, that his volunteer work for a local thrift shop and nature trail did not qualify for service-learning credit because the merit badges he earned meant he had received "compensation," and was therefore not a genuine volunteer. At Liberty High School in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, another student—a Girl Scout volunteering on her own in a nursing home and for Meals on Wheels—forfeited her diploma when she refused to perform 60 hours of *school*-directed community service.

At Rye Neck High School in Mamaroneck, New York, a student who is a Jehovah's Witness had his proposed project rejected on the grounds that it violated the establishment clause of the First Amendment. Another Rye Neck student took the school to court, claiming that his paid work as a lifeguard helped his family cover its living expenses, and he could not spare the time to work as a volunteer. His parents added a philosophical objection of their own; as they explained to the Second Circuit Court of Appeals,

> We have taught our children through both word and example that to do good for others, without being asked or told and without compensation, is its own reward. . . . But never have we told our children that they must, or are obligated to, help others. That would defeat all we have tried to impart to them over the years about serving others and consequently destroy any moral value in serving others.

As such cases illustrate, mandatory voluntarism runs the risk of degrading the virtue of service itself, while politicizing the school curriculum and recruiting impressionable youths for causes dear to the hearts of graying activists. These issues would be vexing enough if individual schools and communities were working them out separately and families could choose the versions that suited them best, or simply opt out. But responsibility for decisions about student voluntarism is now increasingly being shifted from the local to the state and federal level, where, as we have seen, it is eagerly embraced.

In the educational bureaucracies of Washington, officials are now crafting rules for programs, conditions for grants, and measures by which progress toward national goals and objectives will be gauged. Though defenders of these efforts assert that compliance with federal efforts is optional, and that states and communities remain free to chart their own course, decades of experience show that once a federal educational initiative is launched, everything that subsequently happens in states and localities is drawn into its powerful wake.

If this pattern holds true for service learning, students and schools will likely find themselves caught in a pincer, consisting on one side of federal financial support and on the other of national curriculum standards and annual reports of progress toward national educational goals. Anyone acquainted with, for example, the past quarter-century of federal bilingual or "special-education" programs knows just how strong Washington's grip can be. No one associated with these programs can introduce a change or take a step without colliding with a voluminous array of federal regulations, all of them suspended by funding strings. This fate is now befalling service learning, and it will potentially affect all 50 million schoolchildren in the United States.

THE lessons our children are likely to learn from being compelled to "volunteer" are worth worrying about, but children are not the only cause for concern. Offering service to others, with no government coercion or expectation of compensation, is a deeply-rooted American tradition. By far the largest beneficiaries of philanthropic and volunteer impulses are churches, which absorb 62 percent of charitable contributions and the uncompensated services of 52 million people. One wonders how much of the character-shaping benefits of voluntarism in church and community will survive the combination of compulsion and dilution that school-based service learning entails. Are not young people likely to begin to view voluntarism as they do a required lab report, history paper, or laps around the track? Can our highly developed tradition of church-based service even coexist at all with mandatory, government-based programs, or will the former atrophy and die while the latter proliferate and thrive?

Most troubling of all, however, is that our schools, which are performing so poorly in their core mission of transmitting basic skills and essential knowledge, are now diverting time, energy, and money to nonacademic matters. In Maryland, where service learning has made so much headway, only 22 percent of fourth graders were "proficient" readers on the latest national assessment and, on the state's own tests, fewer than half of the eighth graders performed satisfactorily in math. Schools that can barely teach the fundamental skills and information needed by every citizen are now being used by government and adult activists to shape students' attitudes and assumptions about citizenship itself. This is arguably the last thing that should be tampered with by a government that is supposed to be the creation of its citizens, not the other way around.

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The Vulgar Virtuoso

Terry Teachout

LEOPOLD STOKOWSKI (1882-1977) has a permanent and distinguished place in the history of 20th-century music. During his quarter-century tenure as music director of the Philadelphia Orchestra (1912-38), he turned a provincial ensemble into one of the first modern virtuoso orchestras. Throughout his career, in Philadelphia and elsewhere, he was also deeply committed to the music of his time. He conducted over 2,000 first performances, including the world premieres of Ives's Fourth Symphony, Rachmaninoff's *Paganini Rhapsody* and Third Symphony, Schoenberg's Piano and Violin Concertos, and Varèse's *Amériques* and *Arcana*, as well as the American premieres of Berg's *Wozzeck*, Mahler's Eighth Symphony and *Das Lied von der Erde*, Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder*, four symphonies by Shostakovich, three symphonies by Sibelius, and Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* and *Les Noces*.

These achievements are a matter of record. But they are also no longer widely remembered. Ironically enough, it is *Fantasia* (1941), the animated film he made in collaboration with Walt Disney, that has kept Stokowski's name alive for a generation of listeners far too young to remember the time when he was, after Arturo Toscanini, the world's most famous conductor. Indeed, for many music-lovers, Stokowski today remains a symbol of unseriousness—the man who spouted platitudes about music in a phony "continental" accent, made movies not only with Mickey Mouse but with Deanna Durbin, had a highly publicized marriage with Gloria Vanderbilt and a no less highly publicized affair with Greta Garbo, and orchestrated Bach's organ music in the style of Wagner.

To a considerable extent, Stokowski himself was responsible for this view of him as nothing but a musical showman. At a time when the infernal engine of publicity that now drives the classical-music industry did not yet exist, he behaved like a tabloid celebrity, and he has not been forgiven for it.

To be sure, classical-music virtuosi of Stokowski's generation were expected to act like stars, but they usually did so in a more or less dignified manner. Stokowski, by contrast, did exactly as he pleased. Wishing to project an air of mystery, he affected a bizarre homemade syntax that, according to one colleague, was part Slavic, part German, and part cockney; he lied shamelessly about his age, his family background, and his professional experience; he promoted himself aggressively, trading on his striking physical appearance to get his picture in the papers. And worst of all—at least in the eyes of high-minded contemporaries—he went to Hollywood.

As it happened, Stokowski reached the peak of his personal flamboyance at the most difficult moment in his long career. According to Charles O'Connell, who produced his RCA recordings, Stokowski quit the Philadelphia in order to escape

> the strenuous labor of thirty weeks of concerts per year; he wanted time for research, for travel, for musical activities in fields other than the concert hall, and for relaxation. He said that he looked forward to the time when he could conduct four or six concerts a year, make a sound film annually, and conduct a few important broadcasts.

But Stokowski's well-laid plans went badly astray. *Fantasia* was a box-office dud, and he was subsequently fired from the NBC Symphony (which he co-conducted with Toscanini from 1941 to 1944) for programming too much modern music. No other major orchestra would hire him as its music director, in large part because he was too independent-minded to be controlled by a board. His sojourn in Hollywood, though it made him a household name throughout America, convinced already-suspicious critics that he was simply not serious.

It was not until the late 60's that Stokowski regained anything remotely approaching critical respectability, and by then he was too old to capitalize on it. Though he continued to conduct in public and make recordings until shortly before his death, his great days were long behind him. When he died, the celebrity of his later years quickly dissipated, to be revived only in 1991 when the Disney studios released a painstakingly restored version of *Fantasia* to celebrate the film's 50th anniversary, and a new generation encountered Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra for the first time.

BUT THE eclipse of Leopold Stokowski was not solely due to his erratic behavior and bad professional luck. It was also the product of changing musical tastes.

Stokowski's musical training had been utterly conventional. Born in London to a Polish father and an Irish mother, he studied at the Royal College of Music and Queen's College, Oxford, and began his career as a church organist and choirmaster. But as soon as he started to conduct orchestras in 1908, he departed in every imaginable way from the musical conventions of his time and place.

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In the early years of the 20th century—and especially in the United States, where Stokowski was based from 1909 onward—most symphony orchestras were led by German-born conductors and gave straightforward performances of the German classics. By contrast, Stokowski's "canon" (except for Brahms and Wagner) bore no resemblance to the then-standard repertoire. Conceiving orchestral sound in terms not of line but of color and mass, he evinced little or no interest in music unsuited to his kind of treatment. He rarely programmed Mozart, Haydn, or Beethoven, and played pre-classical music only in richly scored transcriptions of his own.

Instead, Stokowski favored the Franco-Russian romantics, the French impressionists, and the early modernists, and he performed their music in an intensely personal style. That style has been memorably described by the pianist Glenn Gould:

> Stokowski was, for want of a better word, an ecstatic. He was involved with the notes, the tempo marks, the dynamics in a score, to the same extent that a filmmaker is involved with the original book or source which supplies the impetus, the idea, for his film.

WHEN Stokowski began to make electrical recordings with the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1925, his high-handed brand of romanticism, though individual even by the standards of the day, was not unprecedented. In the 20's, many conductors took a laissez-faire approach to tempos, and did not regard the printed score as sacrosanct. By the 40's, however, the influence of "objective" performers like Toscanini and the pianist Artur Schnabel had grown immeasurably in the United States. No less influential were their repertoire choices, which were heavily weighted toward the traditional classics.

Thus, Stokowski's style no sooner had a chance to establish itself than it began to be seen as anachronistic. Worse, this happened just as he was choosing to sever his ties with the Philadelphia Orchestra, an institutional affiliation which had conferred on him a degree of professional respectability and done much to offset the peculiarities of his personal behavior. In this respect as in others, his timing in mid-life was devastatingly bad.

Since Stokowski's death, however, musical tastes have changed greatly once again; the classicism of a Toscanini or a Schnabel, though still popular, is no longer seen as the sole and only road to musical wisdom. And the increased availability of recordings by such "subjective" conductors as Wilhelm Furtwängler, Willem Mengelberg, and Serge Koussevitzky has opened the ears of younger listeners to a range of interpretative possibilities wide enough to encompass the Stokowski style.

Moreover, certain aspects of Stokowski's *personal* style may also have become more palatable. In particular, his willingness to use every available media outlet to bring classical music to the largest possible audience (and, admittedly, to enhance his own personal popularity) should not shock anyone at a moment when the record industry looks upon classical music as a "product" to be "marketed" by any means necessary, including cheesecake photos and rock-style promotional videos. A recent CD anthology of "seductive classics by eight of the world's greatest composers who just happen to be gay," *Out Classics*, features on its cover a high-gloss photo of the chest of a sweat-soaked man. Next to this, Stokowski's joint appearance with Mickey Mouse in *Fantasia* is positively virtuous.

BUT now we come to still another reason why Stokowski's reputation has sunk so low: the heart of his musical legacy—the recordings he made with the Philadelphia Orchestra from 1917 to 1940 for RCA Victor—has been largely inaccessible to the public for well over three decades.

These recordings, many of which were best-sellers when originally released on 78, were later "replaced" by LP remakes done by Stokowski in his old age with a variety of orchestras. Many of the remakes are interesting, and some are exceptional, but even the best ones are fundamentally beside the point. It is Stokowski's prewar recordings with the Philadelphia Orchestra that represent one of the most significant bodies of work to be preserved for musical posterity, and virtually none of these was reissued by RCA, either on LP or, later, on compact disc.

In the absence of these old recordings, it was inevitable that Stokowski's brand of music-making would be dismissed as the work of a publicity-hungry poseur; the best evidence to the contrary was locked away in RCA's vaults. Fortunately, however, all this has now changed, thanks to an anomaly of international copyright law.

In Europe, published recordings pass into the public domain after 50 years, and several European record labels have been launched that specialize in the reissue of classics of the 78 era. Two of them, Biddulph and Pearl, have undertaken large-scale Stokowski reissue projects. Five years ago, CD's by Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra were unheard-of; today, it is possible for modern listeners to hear Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra at their best and most characteristic, and to answer for themselves the question of whether he was a charlatan or an interpretative genius.

What happens, then, if one makes the effort to listen to Stokowski's recordings with an ear uninfluenced by fashion? The first thing to be said is that the music is sharply at variance with the image that has come down to us from several generations of scandalized critics.

This is not to deny the famous "Stokowski sound." It exists, and it is as distinctive now as it was seven decades ago. Under Stokowski, the strings of the Philadelphia Orchestra played with fast vibrato, generously applied portamento (the note-to-note slides characteristic of 19th-century string playing), and long, unbroken phrasing; the winds, led by oboist Marcel Tabuteau and flutist William Kincaid, emphasized tonal richness and variety of color to a degree unprecedented in the 20's and unrivaled since then. The orchestra's dy-

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namic range—clarified on records by the superior engineering that was a by-product of Stokowski's pioneering interest in audio technology—was extraordinarily wide, and its tempos flexible to a fault.

Stokowski rarely recorded music that was entirely incompatible with this "sound," and he sometimes laid on his trademark mannerisms too thickly; his recordings of the music of Tchaikowsky, for example, often border on the hysterical. Other Philadelphia performances come across more as fascinating period pieces than as interpretations fully convincing to a contemporary ear: Stokowski's prewar recordings of the Dvorák "New World" *Symphony* and the four Brahms symphonies, which by his own extravagant norms were direct to the point of baldness, are nevertheless unlikely to satisfy listeners accustomed to the tauter approach of Toscanini or Herbert von Karajan.

But when conductor, orchestra, and composer were compatible, the results, even heard in early electric sound, are still remarkable by any standard. Today's orchestras may play the music of Wagner, for example, with greater outright virtuosity, but the unbridled sensuality of Stokowski and the Philadelphia—especially as heard in the conductor's own "symphonic synthesis" from *Tristan und Isolde*, recorded in 1935—retains its power to astonish and arouse. No less breathtaking is a previously unpublished 1940 performance of Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*, in which William Kincaid's flute-playing shimmers and glows like a candle in the dark.

Of particular interest in our austere age of Baroque performance-practice is a two-CD set of Stokowski's Bach organ transcriptions. Hearing these once-infamous arrangements 60 years and more after the fact, one is struck not by their outrageousness but by the simplicity, even plainness, of Stokowski's scoring, in which string and wind choirs are typically played off against each other like the manuals of a 19th-century organ. True, the interpretations are a different story—Stokowski is at his most unabashedly romantic here—but those who find today's period-instrument specialists too dry and unadventurous will thrill to the headlong vitality of Stokowski's version of the Bach D Minor Toccata and Fugue and C Minor Passacaglia, or the dark solemnity of the chorale preludes "*Ich ruf, zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ*" and "*Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland.*"*

THE appeal of the Stokowski Philadelphia Orchestra recordings goes deeper than their gorgeous sound. Even the least satisfactory of them remind me of a remark of Edmund Wilson's about F. Scott Fitzgerald: "I have said that *This Side of Paradise* commits almost every sin that a novel can possibly commit: but it does not commit the unpardonable sin: it does not fail to live." These are, above all, documents of a matchlessly vital musical personality, an artist who saw himself not as an interpreter but as a collaborator, and who believed that music has a role in man's life greater than that of mere entertainment.

It is as easy to make fun of Stokowski's vaporous pronouncements on the meaning of music ("When we reach its ultimate essence, music is the voice of the All—the divine melody—the cosmic rhythm—the universal harmony") as it is to criticize his more eccentric recordings. But before dismissing those pronouncements out of hand, one should give thought to their implications. Certainly Stokowski's subjectivism was, at least to his mind, more than a matter of vanity. As he told Glenn Gould in a 1969 radio interview:

> We write black marks on white paper—the mere facts of frequency; but music is a communication much more subtle than mere facts. The best a composer can do when within him he hears a great melody is to put it on paper. We call it music, but that is not music: that is only paper. Some believe that one should merely mechanically reproduce the marks on the paper, but I do not believe in that. One must go much further than that. We must defend the composer against the mechanical conception of life which is becoming more and more strong today.

Classicists may seize upon this statement as proof of Stokowski's arrogance, just as prigs seize upon his films as proof of his essential vulgarity. But the test of every musical idea is to be found in the immediate experience of performance: great performances, no matter how idiosyncratic, justify themselves by their power to seize the ear and animate the soul. Judged by that standard, Leopold Stokowski was among the greatest conductors of the century, and no one should feel ashamed to say so—Mickey Mouse or no Mickey Mouse.

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*The Dvorák "New World" Symphony, recorded in 1927, is available on Biddulph WHL 027; the Brahms symphonies, recorded between 1927 and 1933, on Biddulph WHL 017-18, a two-CD set. Stokowski's *Tristan* "symphonic synthesis" is coupled on Pearl GEMM CD 9486 with orchestral preludes from *Die Meistersinger* and *Lohengrin* and three of the *Wesendonck Lieder* sung by Helen Traubel, plus additional material from *Tristan*. An album entitled *Leopold Stokowski Conducts Music from France, Vol. 3* (Biddulph WHL 013) contains the unreleased 1940 *Faune*, coupled with other works by Debussy and Ravel. Pearl GEMM CDS 9098 contains one version of every Bach transcription recorded by Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra on 78's (several were recorded more than once). All of these CD's have been meticulously transferred from the original 78's by engineers Ward Marston and Mark Obert-Thorn, and the sound, here as on the many other Stokowski CDs available from Biddulph and Pearl, is outstanding.

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Race for the "Super"

DARK SUN: THE MAKING OF THE HYDROGEN BOMB. By RICHARD RHODES. *Simon & Schuster. 731 pp. $32.50.*

Reviewed by
WALTER A. MCDOUGALL

IN THE fall of 1949, the President's general advisory committee on atomic energy held hearings on whether and how the United States ought to try for the hydrogen "super" bomb: a thermonuclear warhead based on atomic fusion and theoretically capable of releasing a thousand times more energy than the fission bombs used in August 1945 at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. J. Robert Oppenheimer, one of the parents of the A-bomb but now an opponent of H-bomb development, was put on the stand, and his concluding remarks, laced with irony, cut to the heart of the ethical and strategic dilemmas involved in building a weapon too awful to use.

Q. In fact, Doctor, you testified, did you not, that you assisted in selecting the target for the drop of the atomic bomb on Japan?
A. Right. . . .
Q. How many were killed or injured?
A. Seventy thousand.
Q. Did you have moral scruples about that?
A. Terrible ones. . . .
Q. Would you have supported the dropping of a thermonuclear bomb on Hiroshima?
A. It would make no sense at all.
Q. Why?
A. The target is too small.

Now that we have beaten to death the questions surrounding the atomic bombs dropped on Japan 50 years ago, the next task is to explain why, in what passed for peacetime, the postwar superpowers not only raced to invent ever more powerful weapons but proceeded to deploy them in arsenals capable of blowing up all the cities on earth many times over. Richard Rhodes, whose previous book, *The Making of the Atomic Bomb* (1986), won a Pulitzer Prize, has undertaken this task in a follow-up history of the H-bomb. The answers he provides, and the data they are based on, will not surprise professional historians, especially now that David Holloway in *Stalin and the Bomb* has thoroughly documented the Soviet side of the arms race. But Rhodes is a fine writer, and *Dark Sun*'s fast-paced narrative conveys the rhythm and suspense of the race for the "super," while highlighting the personal anxieties of the scientists, spies, and statesmen involved.

The book opens not where Rhodes's previous one left off, in 1945, but in 1939 in the Soviet Union. And rightly so, for if the seeds of the nuclear age were sown in the war against Hitler, so, too, were those of the thermonuclear age. As early as 1939, Stalin's NKVD (the predecessor of the KGB) was prying its way into foreign research programs: Germany's in the first instance, but by 1942 Britain's and America's as well. According to Rhodes, it was the Soviets' success in stealing atomic secrets—and the fear thereby created among Americans—that helped spoil the chances for international control of atomic power after 1945.

In the first part of *Dark Sun*, Rhodes draws on Soviet documents made available since the end of the cold war and FBI files obtained under the Freedom of Information Act to reconstruct the movements of Klaus Fuchs, David Gold, Julius Rosenberg, David Greenglass, and other Communist agents who penetrated the Manhattan Project. He also shows the shocking use Stalin made of Soviet access to American soil via Lend-Lease transshipment bases in Alaska and Montana. Hundreds of Soviet operatives entered the country virtually at will and fanned out to collect some 10,000 pages of intelligence, ranging from maps of the Panama Canal and blueprints of U.S. factories to secret scientific data. The ultimate payoff came on July 2, 1945, when the Soviet physicist Igor Kurchatov was handed a rough design of the American bomb and a report that it would be tested on the 10th. The report was only six days off.

The Soviet bomb program had earlier suffered two terrible blows: the Nazi invasion of 1941 and Stalin's own "war within a war" against his own scientists whose loyalty he suspected. But spying more than made up for those handicaps. At the Potsdam Conference in 1945, when Truman casually mentioned that the U.S. possessed a "new weapon of unusual destructive force," he was saying nothing that Stalin did not already know. Just two months later, in September 1945, Foreign Commissar Vyacheslav Molotov told the British Foreign Minister, Aneurin Bevin, in London: "You know we have the atomic bomb." A slight exaggeration! But by October the Soviets did have in hand detailed plans of the "Fat Man" plutonium device dropped on Nagasaki.

Soviet physicists then jumped to Stalin's order to complete their own bomb just as America's scientists and statesmen were breaking up the Manhattan Project and turning to ways of heading off an arms race. Hence the second part of *Dark Sun*, which covers the years from 1945 to 1950. It was during those years that American physicists, led by Oppenheimer, Enrico Fermi, and I.I. Rabi, lobbied for international controls, and even the Strangelovian Edward Teller (whom Rhodes dubs "the Richard Nixon of American science—dark, brooding, indefatigable") devoted himself to family and scholarship at the University of Chicago and dreamed of world government.

The Truman administration, too, initially hoped to put the

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nuclear genie back in the bottle. It sponsored a plan, co-authored by Secretary of State Dean Acheson and David Lilienthal, then-chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, to place all the world's nuclear materials under United Nations control. Unfortunately, as Rhodes sees it, the plan was entrusted to Bernard Baruch, who appended such stringent conditions for verification that it stood no chance of winning Soviet acceptance. Whether any plan would have satisfied Stalin is moot—indeed, Rhodes in general declines to enter the historians' fray over who was to blame for the cold war. But while the Americans dithered after 1945, NKVD chief Lavrenti Beria cracked the whip, demanding that in the interest of speed, Soviet scientists work from the stolen American plans. The first Soviet reactor and bomb, exploded in 1949, were virtual "carbon copies" of American ones.

THE political climax of the story follows at once. How should the U.S. respond to this "premature" Soviet bomb? Was there a better chance now than before to negotiate an end to the arms race, or at least to freeze the race at the atomic level? Or would Truman have to move heaven and earth to regain a nuclear advantage by beating the Soviet Union to the next plateau of destruction, the hydrogen bomb, even though nobody yet knew how to make one?

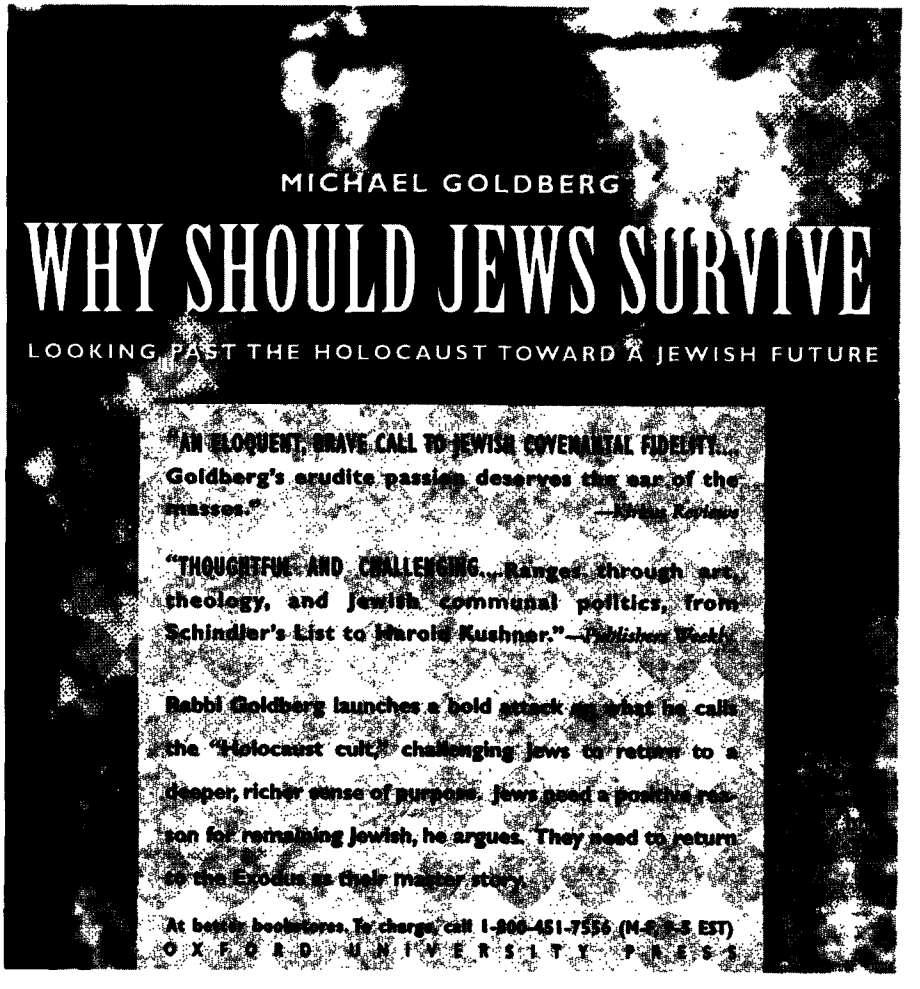
After months of anxious debate that tore the scientific community asunder, Truman reluctantly opted in December 1950 to race. Rhodes is careful to describe the diplomatic context in which the decision was made: not only the Soviet A-bomb that came "two years early" but Soviet refusal to permit UN inspections on its soil, the takeover of Eastern Europe, revelations of past Soviet espionage, the Berlin blockade, the fall of China to Communism, and finally the outbreak of the Korean war. But Rhodes's sympathies clearly lie with Fermi and Rabi, who judged that H-bombs would go "far beyond any military objective" and be "necessarily an evil thing considered in any light."

So Rhodes applauds the majority of Truman's general advisory committee, which recommended that the U.S. refrain from crossing the thermonuclear threshold and that Stalin be invited to follow suit. And he laments the fact that Truman "began what became a U.S. presidential tradition of maintaining and enlarging a threatening nuclear arsenal he had no intention of using except for political leverage in international negotiations."

The third part of the book tells the story of how Teller and Stanislaw Ulam made the breakthroughs in mathematics, physics, and engineering necessary to build and trigger a fusion bomb. Rhodes's most intriguing judgment here is that Teller, the self-styled "father of the H-bomb," actually retarded U.S. progress because of his insistence that the "super" yield at least one megaton. In fact, the artificial globular sun created by the successful "Mike" test over Nevada on November 1, 1952, yielded ten megatons. Soviet scientists working under Andrei Sakharov soon matched this feat, and human beings acquired the means to commit global suicide.

SO FAR, so good. Rhodes is on the whole to be commended for the job he has done in *Dark Sun*, but there is one major exception.

Rhodes asserts that as early as 1949, "a degree of mutual deterrence had already been installed between the United States and Soviet Union even before the Soviet Union finished building its first atomic bomb." If that is so—if Truman, Stalin, and all subsequent leaders on both sides recognized that nuclear as well as thermonuclear bombs were too terrible to use—then clearly the escalation of the arms race amounted to insane "overkill." But Rhodes's evidence for the early existence of mutual deterrence consists of a single quotation about the bomb in which Truman told Lilienthal, "This isn't just another weapon . . . we will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never use it again if we can possibly help it." That statement does not say what Rhodes claims it does; and even if we accept his interpretation, it is contradicted by the following fifteen years of strategic doctrine and crisis diplomacy.

In denying that the nuclear balance had any military meaning during the cold war, Rhodes misses the point. Although no American President wanted to use nuclear weapons, no President ever *renounced* their possible use, either, even their "first use." And as for Soviet doctrine, it never abandoned the principle that wars are fought to be won, using any effective means to that end. The nuclear balance was of great importance in the diplomacy of the powers at the beginning and end of the Korean war; in the Suez and Hungarian crises; in the Berlin crises; and in the Yom Kippur war, to name just some major occasions.

Unfortunately (and unnecessarily) Rhodes expands on his misconception in the last chapter and epilogue, where he asks whether the arms race was in any way necessary or just a $4-trillion potlatch that contributed to American decline. He answers this question without reference to the political stakes of the cold war, or to the role that nuclear superiority ("escalation dominance") played in crisis diplomacy, or to the American need to counter Soviet-bloc superiority in conventional military forces, or to the psychological importance of American technological leadership, or to the totalitarian nature of the Soviet adversary.

Instead, he explains the arms race by appealing to two authorities: an obscure political scientist named Miroslav Nincic, and Mikhail Gorbachev. Both consider the United States the "initiator" of the nuclear contest. Nincic in particular blames it on interservice rivalry, the scientific-industrial complex, "the pressure of 'defense' as a political issue and defense spending to prime the economic pump"—and Rhodes appears to agree.

And what about nuclear proliferation beyond the two superpowers? For Rhodes, it was a product of "political homeostasis." The U.S. felt it had to beat Nazi Germany to the bomb, whereupon the USSR raced to catch up to the U.S., China to balance both superpowers, India to deter China, Pakistan to thwart India, the Arabs to balance Israel, etc. The American decision to build the bombs was thus a modern Adam's sin that condemned all who came after to repeat our folly. And that is why the dark prince of *Dark Sun* is not Stalin, or the rocket-rattling Khrushchev, but General Curtis LeMay, the American hawk who, Rhodes claims, itched to nuke North Korea and even the USSR.

THE evidence for genuine insubordination on LeMay's part is rather scanty: a conversation with Robert Sprague, a member of a 1957 committee charged by President Eisenhower to study the danger of a Soviet surprise attack. LeMay is quoted as saying that if he saw the Russians massing for an air attack, "I'm going to knock the shit out of them before they take off the ground." Sprague replied that this was not national policy, to which LeMay retorted (according to Sprague), "I don't care. It's my policy," or (according to another member of the committee, Jerome Wiesner), "It's my job to make it possible for the President to change his policy."

Sounds scary. But what was the context? Sprague had just berated the Strategic Air Command (SAC) for taking six hours to respond to a simulated war, and the general was probably trying to *reassure* the panel concerning SAC's reaction time. To suggest, as Rhodes does, that LeMay was repudiating the authority of his commander-in-chief, in front of the President's own representatives, is not credible. What is more, "pre-delegation"—the granting of authority to military chiefs to launch an attack upon certain predefined conditions—was a natural corollary of Eisenhower's "massive-retaliation" strategy. As outlined in a NATO policy document of December 1954, it was meant to alleviate the fears of our European allies that they might be overrun by the Red Army. Rhodes himself quotes General Thomas D. White to the effect that "authority to order retaliatory attack may be exercised by [the commander of SAC] if time and circumstances would not permit a decision by the President."

Rhodes's deprecatory attitude to America's own generals—some of them, he writes, were eager to "get World War III started"—is on display again in his brief discussion of the Cuban missile crisis. This he depicts as a contest not between President Kennedy and Soviet Premier Khrushchev but rather between Kennedy and a fevered LeMay, who wanted to bomb the Soviet missile sites in Cuba. (That Dean Acheson and General Maxwell Taylor advised the same goes unrecorded.) Rhodes then surmises that LeMay "may have been goading Kennedy to attack Cuba as an excuse to launch full nuclear preemption. . . ." Yet not only is such an extreme supposition irrelevant to an understanding of Kennedy's crisis management, it contradicts LeMay's own later judgment that "there wasn't a chance that we would have gone to war with Russia because we had overwhelming strategic capability and the Russians knew it."

As Rhodes depicts it, the choice in Cuba was a simple one, between Armageddon and peace: "If John Kennedy had followed LeMay's advice, history would have forgotten the Nazis and their terrible Holocaust. Ours would have been the historic omnicide." In fact, the decision at hand was a complex and delicate one, involving what risks the U.S. was willing to take, according to what calculation of the likely Soviet reaction, in order to achieve what more or less advantageous outcome to the crisis.

Dark Sun proves again that Richard Rhodes has thought deeply and well about the conundrums of politicized science in a democracy, and has the skill to convey his wisdom to a general audience. But his blanket condemnation of U.S. military strategies in the perilous age of the cold war suggests, at a minimum, insufficient research into the diplomatic and military documents of those conflicts, and into the literature of nuclear deterrence. One

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need only ask what the world would be like today if Khrushchev or Mao Zedong had been the one with overwhelming nuclear force at his disposal in those days, and Kennedy the one who was bluffing. However much we may now recoil from the terrors of the nuclear age, that is one thought experiment I am grateful was never played out.

Old & New Christians

THE ORIGINS OF THE INQUISITION IN FIFTEENTH-CENTURY SPAIN. By B. NETANYAHU. *Random House. 1,384 pp. $50.00.*

Reviewed by DAVID BERGER

In 1391, the prosperous, confident, acculturated Jewish community in Christian Spain was rocked by a series of pogroms; thus was inaugurated a century of travails that culminated in the expulsion of 1492. Intense missionary efforts on the part of Christian authorities—including a seemingly endless public disputation between representatives of the two faiths in 1413-14 at Tortosa—combined with episodes of violence to produce a situation unprecedented in Jewish history: an officially tolerated community living side by side with a large community of newly baptized Jews.

It is hardly surprising that "Old Christians" did not embrace these *conversos*—or Marranos, or "New Christians"—with unambivalent fervor. Mass conversion poses a psychological dilemma quite different from the conversion of individuals; the majority's attitude toward an entire group cannot be expected to undergo a radical transformation virtually overnight. Although significant segments of Spanish society did welcome the newcomers, in many circles hostility to Jews in general was extended to the New Christians, and by the middle of the 15th century, massive anti-*converso* rioting began to erupt. For several decades, it was safer to be an overt Jew in Spain than a recent convert to Christianity. Finally, in the last quarter of the century, the accusation that the *conversos* were still practicing Judaism in secret served as the basis for establishing a formal Inquisition, designed to ferret out "judaizers."

MODERN historians of the Inquisition, whatever they may think of it morally, have generally accepted the factual assumption upon which it rested—namely, that a majority of New Christians in 15th-century Spain were, in truth, crypto-Jews. Thirty years ago, however, the Israeli scholar B. Netanyahu, then a professor at Cornell University, initiated a challenge to this prevailing view. His 1966 study, *The Marranos of Spain From the Late XIVth to the Early XVIth Century According to Contemporary Hebrew Sources*, argued that attitudes toward *conversos* expressed by *Jewish* authorities in legal, philosophical, polemical, homiletical, and exegetical works became more skeptical as the 15th century wore on; indeed, the closer a writer was to the existing social reality, the more negative his assessment was likely to be. By the end of the century, the dominant assertion was that in virtually every respect, Jewish law should treat the *conversos* not as secret Jews but as Gentiles pure and simple.

In a foreword to the first edition of *The Marranos of Spain*, Netanyahu informed his readers that he was conducting a parallel study of the non-Hebrew documents, and that it was "in an advanced stage of preparation"; in a 1971 preface to the second edition, he indicated that completion of this study was "already in sight." Twenty-five years later, and two decades after a shattering personal tragedy, we have the massive result of this research in a work "dedicated with unrelieved grief to the memory of my beloved son Jonathan who fell while leading the rescue force at Entebbe on July 4, 1976."

Netanyahu's new book is the product of an acute intellect and

DAVID BERGER *is professor of history at Brooklyn College and the author of* The Jewish-Christian Debate in the High Middle Ages.

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enormous learning. It provides a detailed account of the attacks on Jews and *conversos*; mini-biographies of the key personalities; analyses of court intrigues; close, often illuminating readings of pro- and anti-*converso* polemics; and a vigorous presentation of the author's key theses.

At the risk of oversimplification, Netanyahu's essential argument can be summarized as follows. Sources in Spanish and Latin reinforce the conclusion that by the middle of the 15th century, the overwhelming majority of Marranos were genuine Christians. This means that the Inquisition could not have been motivated by real concern about *converso* judaizing. What, then? Social and economic factors played an important role in the developing hostility, particularly in the wake of *converso* penetration of government and Church, but even this does not tell the entire story. Instead, what mainly fueled the physical attacks, the legal efforts to exclude New Christians from influential positions, and, finally, the Inquisition itself was a racial theory, enhanced by a sense of national separatism, which regarded the Marranos' Jewishness as an ineradicable contaminant.

READERS skeptical about any portion of Netanyahu's thesis will find themselves buffeted by wave after wave of argument by a master polemicist. The overall impact is strengthened by the striking observations in this book about matters peripheral to the thesis itself but central to the history of Spanish Jewry. Netanyahu, for example, addresses the old question of why Crusade-era Jews in Northern Europe resisted conversion more steadfastly than did late medieval Spanish Jewry; he points out that Spanish Christians were *trying* to convert Jews, while the Crusaders were interested primarily in murder. This is not the whole answer, but it is an insight of the first importance.

And yet—skepticism is warranted.

First of all, Netanyahu's book needs to be placed in its own chronological context. As it turns out, his assertion in 1971 that the work was virtually complete appears to have been essentially correct. Fewer than fifteen items in the new book's 25-page bibliography (aside from citations of the author's own work) bear publication dates later than 1980, and only three later than 1984. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that an entire generation of recent scholarship goes unrepresented here. Some of this scholarship addresses issues of social history which are highly relevant to intergroup relations or to the attitudes of different classes within the various religious communities in Spain; some of it confronts Netanyahu's concerns directly.

As for the argument itself, the question of the extent of Marrano judaizing raises fascinating issues of historical method. Critics of Netanyahu's earlier work on the Hebrew sources noted that the author of a 15th-century rabbinic ruling may have had one set of criteria for determining Jewishness, while the modern historian may have another, more latitudinarian one. Thus, a Marrano who refrained from leaving Spain on an available ship yesterday but attended a Passover seder today may have been a willing Christian to the rabbi, but to the historian he must be counted as a crypto-Jew.

In the present work, Netanyahu resists the suggestion that there could have been *conversos* who violated such religious obligations as the Sabbath but observed others, like Passover; and he minimizes the number of judaizers, to the point of appearing to endorse a mid-15th-century claim that there may have been only ten of them in Toledo (though he goes on to make the minor concession that there may really have been 50 or 100). The descendants of the original converts, he insists, had "no notion whatever of Judaism, either in theory or in practice.... They were *unaware* of it." Although evidence of *converso* emigration from Spain and return to Judaism forces him to acknowledge "some Jewish pockets" in the 1460's and 1470's, and to indicate that persecution itself awakened a Jewish spark in a small number of Marranos, so devoid of nuance is the bulk of his presentation that one wonders how such a spark could have been lit in the first place.

IN GENERAL, despite sporadic expressions of caution, this book is marked by a degree of confidence unjustified by the nature of the sources. Netanyahu declares that his purpose is "to establish, on the basis of clear evidence, the precise borderline between the false and the true in all that was ascribed to the Marranos and their life." But much of what he does here involves the reconstruction of motives and intentions through a series of inferences based on slim evidence. Sometimes the results are persuasive, even compelling; often, they amount to nothing more—and occasionally less—than a plausible hypothesis.

A case in point concerns one of Netanyahu's crucial themes—namely, that it was solely the desire to curry favor with the anti-Semitic masses that induced numerous Spanish authorities, like King Ferdinand himself, who were not personally racist or even particularly hostile, to persecute *conversos*, massacre them, and establish the Inquisition to torment them. The evidentiary foundation for this claim is sparse, and yet the thesis itself is presented with absolute assurance.

In the final chapters, where Netanyahu summarizes his conclusions, he does introduce some important qualifications. Thus, he briefly acknowledges that even if the accusation of *converso* judaizing was false, it was widely believed to be true, and this in itself could have been a major factor in the establishment of the Inquisition as well as in other forms of anti-*converso* behavior. Again, in the midst of a passionate denunciation of the Inquisition as the work of hypocritical, sadistic racists who had to know that the charges they were making were false, there is a remarkable concession, most of it in parentheses: "Apart from religious interests (which no doubt motivated some of [the Inquisition's] leaders)...." So one *could* be a leader of the Inquisition and believe that the charges against the *conversos* were

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true, after all. In fact, in an era when most people credited confessions elicited through torture, and when there was, even according to Netanyahu, a small movement of return to Judaism, many Inquisitors surely did believe that they had uncovered genuine judaizing—and occasionally, perhaps often, they were right.

FINALLY, Netanyahu's discussion of racism raises complicated questions of causation. He makes the important point that ingrained hatred toward Jews was not easily uprooted by conversion; and he explains how the formation of racist theory may have served as a solution to the problem faced by those wishing to deny positions of authority to *conversos*. But he goes on to maintain that another "reason why racism arose" was fear of intermarriage between Old and New Christians. Fear of intermarriage, however, would be a problem only for people *already* affected by racist, or quasi-racist, sentiments. Besides, for racists the Inquisition must have been a mixed blessing, predicated as it was on the assumption that *conversos* could be good *or* bad Christians; not everyone brought up on charges was convicted.

Netanyahu's emphasis on the primacy of racism is undermined, then, by some of his own analysis. And little wonder, for in the evolution of anti-*converso* sentiment there was a complex interweaving of motives. We are not likely to achieve an understanding of "the precise borderline between the false and the true in all that was ascribed to the Marranos," not only because the evidence is obscure but also because there often was no clear line. Partly Jewish and partly Christian, the *conversos* were attacked by Old Christians out of social, political, economic, racial, and, yes, religious motives.

Still, even if we should be inclined to see a murky reality where Netanyahu paints a sharply focused portrait, we must not blur the moral clarity he brings to his denunciation of Inquisitorial evil, or scant the genuine achievements of this impressive, problematic, and penetrating book.

A Literary Life

EDMUND WILSON: A BIOGRAPHY. By JEFFREY MEYERS. *Houghton-Mifflin. 554 pp. $35.00.*

Reviewed by JOHN GROSS

EDMUND WILSON (1895-1972) was a central figure in the literary life of his time. In his journalism of the 1920's and his pioneering study *Axel's Castle* (1932), he did more than anyone else to chart the achievements of modernism for ordinary readers. His later books ranged from psychologically based reassessments of established literary authors, as in *The Wound and the Bow* (1941), to a best-selling account of the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, to political history and polemics, to fiction. As a member of the staff of the *New Republic* from 1921 to 1941, and subsequently during his long connection as a critic with the *New Yorker*, he published review-essays and reportage on an extraordinary variety of subjects.

A formidably productive career, then; and also one much gossiped-about. Wilson engaged in some celebrated controversies: with New York State censors over his sexually tinged collection of stories, *Memoirs of Hecate County* (1946); with the Modern Language Association over its publicly funded and (in his view) desperately pedantic editions of American literary classics; with the Internal Revenue Service over his unpaid taxes. He had a stormy marriage to Mary McCarthy (the third of his four wives). His close friends included F. Scott Fitzgerald, a Princeton classmate, and Vladimir Nabokov, whom he originally championed but with whom he subsequently had a spectacular falling-out over Nabokov's translation of Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*.

A BIOGRAPHY of Wilson has been long overdue—he died more than twenty years ago—and Jeffrey Meyers, a seasoned practitioner, has come up with an intelligent, well-

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JOHN GROSS *is the author of* The Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters *and* Shylock: A Legend and Its Legacy, *among other books.*

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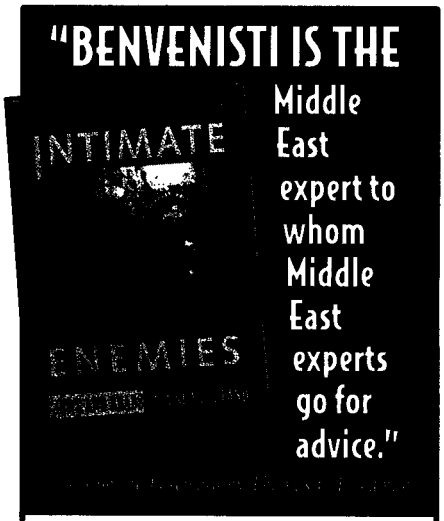

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executed piece of work. Stylistically it has its unhappy moments, but in general Meyers displays good sense and writes readable prose. His research, too, has been thorough. Though he draws heavily on already published diaries and other autobiographical material, we are left with a much more comprehensive picture of Wilson than we have previously had.

Not that this is an unalloyed pleasure. Much of Wilson's personal life makes for depressing reading—his notorious boozing, his bad temper, his seductions (or at any rate the clinical manner in which he chose to record them in his posthumously published diaries), the ease with which he crossed the line from crustiness to bristling egoism. True, the anecdotes Meyers recounts often show Wilson in an amiable or impressive light; for the most part, though, the portrait of the private man that emerges is hardly appealing.

Fortunately, this is only part of the story, and the lesser part, since Meyers is primarily concerned with Wilson's literary career. Wilson has often been called the greatest modern American man of letters, but the accolade seems superfluous: there is no other serious contender for the title. Although there are critics who have excelled him in important departments, no one in the U.S. or indeed in the English-speaking world can match his range, his powers of exposition, his ability to popularize without sacrificing standards, the skill with which he presents literary history as a form of personal and social drama. To read him at his best is to have horizons opened and energies aroused.

Meyers offers guidance on many different aspects of Wilson the working author: his relationship with other writers, his dealings with editors and publishers, the biographical dimension behind individual pieces of work. Above all, we are reminded of the role Wilson played with unparalleled distinction: that of the literary freelance. He was an independent commentator who assumed that literature existed in the first instance to be read rather than studied, and who addressed himself, in principle at least, to the equally independent general reader.

Wilson's natural medium was the essay. He had trouble sustaining an argument or a narrative over hundreds of pages, and his full-length books tend to break down into sketches, studies, portraits, individual chapters. Still, that is hardly a disgrace: the same could be said of Dr. Johnson, William Hazlitt, Saint-Beuve, and others. Taken in conjunction with Wilson's other qualities as a writer, this particular one can be seen as a sign of variety and openness rather than mere lack of direction. In any case, his personality supplied all the unity one could want.

BUT that still leaves, alas, the question of Wilson's politics, which, from around 1930, form a recurrent theme in his work. Most of what Meyers has to say about this subject is sensible as far as it goes, though he is inclined to err on the side of indulgence.

There were two major strands in Wilson's political outlook. The first was a patrician radicalism—rather like Henry Adams, he believed that the wrong elements (i.e., the twin forces of industrialism and the bourgeoisie) had gained control of American life after the Civil War; during the Depression, this element in his political views became more intense and was given a Marxist tilt. The second was Wilson's own private brand of pacifism, initially a response to the horrifying sights he witnessed while serving in an army hospital unit during World War I.

Meyers brings home how deeply Wilson was marked by his military experience: he emerged from the army convinced that war was something to be avoided at all cost. This was a feeling he shared with countless other members of his generation in many countries, but in Wilson's case it persisted throughout the 30's, long after the need to rearm had become abundantly clear, and at a moment when revulsion from war had become one of Hitler's strongest cards in his game with the democracies.

Nor can it be said that Wilson faced up squarely to the implications of his pacifism. What we find in him is less a tragic recognition that, to put it bluntly, others would be paying the cost of his principles than a stream of low-grade isolationist prejudice. Thus, he stubbornly maintained that the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 had been engineered by Franklin D. Roosevelt, and he caricatured Winston Churchill as the mad brother in *Arsenic and Old Lace* who keeps charging up the stairs under the impression that he is Teddy Roosevelt at San Juan Hill. In his postwar writings, Wilson became known for a strong streak of philo-Semitism; this was possibly an oblique attempt to make amends for his earlier views about World War II. Be that as it may, those views reveal an astonishing lack of moral imagination.

WILSON'S isolationist stance was bad enough, but as a theme in his work it pales in significance next to his enthusiasm for Marx and Lenin. Though never a Communist, he put in his time as one of the party's "useful idiots," and never more incandescently than in his 1936 *Travels in Two Democracies*—the two in question being the U.S. and the USSR. Meyers makes the essential point about this work: it was a monument to wishful thinking. Written near the height of Stalin's Great Terror, it glorified the Soviet system in the face of facts which Wilson himself suspected, or knew, or to an extent even reported.

Yet Meyers's summary does not quite convey the awful flavor of the worst passages in *Travels in Two Democracies*: the drooling over Lenin's face ("exquisite fineness . . . profoundly aristocratic"); the breathtaking reassurance that "of course [the Communist system] is no worse than Hollywood (though the penalties—death and deportation—are greater)"; the sense that Russia was "at the moral top of the world." As we learn from Meyers, Wilson spouted this palaver even after he had received from the novelist John Dos Passos a letter spelling out the principal blots on the Soviet record.

True, Wilson grew somewhat disenchanted with Communism soon after the book's publication. He

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distanced himself from American Stalinists, and took a firm line against Soviet policy. One might have hoped that he would then have gone even further, that the jolt of realizing how wrong he had been would have led him to rethink his whole political position. Instead, he pushed ahead with his reconstruction of the European revolutionary tradition in *To the Finland Station.*

That book, first published in 1940, is a masterpiece of romantic historical narrative. But it is also impenitent in its idealizing of Marxism in general and of Lenin in particular. Reissued as a paperback in the 1950's, it continued to sell heavily in the 1960's, and helped pave the way for the emergence of a de-Stalinized but still Leninized New Left. It was not until a year before his death that Wilson, in the introduction to a new edition, admitted to a change of mind: "I have been charged with having given a much too amiable picture of Lenin, and I believe that this criticism is not without some justification." This is hardly the most ringing sentence he ever wrote, and the whole introduction is a weak performance—very weak, given the enormity of the issues at stake. Still, better something than nothing, and better late than never.

IN THE end, however, it must be said that when he was functioning as a literary critic, Wilson seldom permitted his politics to distort his judgment in any serious way. Meyers is therefore right not to dwell overly long on the notorious introduction to his 1962 book about the Civil War, *Patriotic Gore.* That introduction offers a Darwinian reading of the cold war as, at bottom, a struggle between sea slugs writ large; but the striking thing is how little the introduction impinges on the rest of the book. In exploring Civil War authors, many of them neglected or obscure, Wilson proved once again that his greatest strength lay in the individual case history, the imaginative assessment of a personality or a career, the use of literature to illuminate (in the terminology of his model, the 19th-century French critic Hippolyte Taine) a specific *moment* and *milieu.* The literary Wilson will live. The longer the shadows that are cast over the field of literary studies by today's deconstructionists and other ideologues, the brighter his achievement will shine. And the political Wilson deserves to be remembered, too—if only as an object lesson in what all too many intellectuals in our century, even the greatest among them, failed to avoid.

Nature's Laws?

SCIENCE AND THE FOUNDING FATHERS: SCIENCE IN THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF JEFFERSON, FRANKLIN, ADAMS, AND MADISON. By I. BERNARD COHEN. *Norton. 368 pp. $25.00.*

Reviewed by ADAM SCHULMAN

WHAT relevance does modern science have for the political principles we live by? Has the progress of science sustained or rather undermined the foundations of our republic, in particular the natural rights boldly proclaimed in our Declaration of Independence and made effectual in our Constitution?

These are important and even urgent questions, and to address them one might well begin by asking what role science played in the political thought of our Founding Fathers. That is the stated theme of the latest book by I. Bernard Cohen, professor emeritus of the history of science at Harvard University and himself one of the founding fathers of the modern discipline of the history of science. In view of his prestige and his expertise in the science of Isaac Newton, Benjamin Franklin, and the 18th century generally, Cohen's *Science and the Founding Fathers* is likely to become the standard work in the field.

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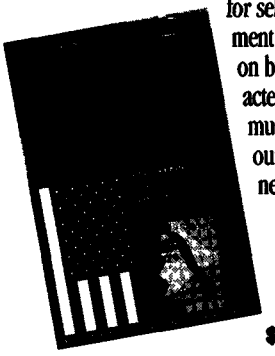

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science and technology, from mathematical physics and astronomy to archeology and paleontology, from scientific agriculture to experimental medicine. We are told of Franklin's seminal role in establishing the science of electricity, his invention of the lightning rod, and his contributions to demography, meteorology, and a host of other infant sciences. Cohen reports in detail the scientific education John Adams received as an undergraduate at Harvard College. And he presents James Madison as a devoted amateur of the sciences, "a cultivated citizen of the Age of Reason."

The book also examines the various ways in which science and politics mixed in the careers of the Founders: how Jefferson, for example, used his mathematical skills in designing a method of apportionment for Congress; how Franklin's celebrity as a scientist enhanced his standing as a diplomat in Paris.

DESPITE the book's subtitle, however, Cohen devotes surprisingly little attention to the role of science in the political *thought* of the Founders. He seems, in fact, to believe that role was a limited one. Neither in the deliberations of the Constitutional Convention nor in the arguments of *The Federalist* does he detect "a single example in which the physical and the biological sciences provided an important concept, model, power, or restriction used in framing the principles of the new government." Instead, says Cohen, the numerous scientific analogies, metaphors, and references which pervade the Founders' writings were chiefly in the service of rhetoric, borrowing the higher authority of science to buttress a practical political argument.

Thus, Cohen effectively refutes the longstanding myth that our Constitution is fundamentally "Newtonian" in its architecture. Woodrow Wilson was evidently the first in a long line of thinkers to argue that the Constitution's principles of separation of powers and checks and balances were borrowed directly from the supposed equipoise of gravitational forces in Newton's account of the solar system. As Cohen shows, however, it is a gross misconstruction of Newton's physics to think that in his system the planets are preserved in their orbits by a perfect balance of centripetal and centrifugal forces. And while "equilibrium of forces" was a conspicuous feature of 17th-century statics, "balance of power" as a political precept can be traced (as it was by John Adams) to Machiavelli and his disciples, with no discernible debt to the corresponding principle in physics.

Nevertheless, in his zeal to debunk the Newtonian misreading of the Constitution, Cohen passes over in silence the more profound sense in which the Constitution embodies a new attitude toward human nature that is closely affiliated with modern science, if not actually dependent on it. Its core idea is the policy, elaborated by Madison in *The Federalist*, "of supplying by opposite and rival interests, the defect of better motives." By enabling "ambition to counteract ambition," the Constitution turns selfishness into a virtue, or at any rate directs its force to the common benefit.

Taking men as they are, not as they might be in some utopian vision, the Constitution aims to manage rather than moralize a recalcitrant human nature. This new realism in politics may not be a straightforward deduction from modern science, but its alliance with that science in the writings of Bacon, Hobbes, Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, and Hume is so germane to Cohen's theme that it is astonishing he never mentions it.

WHILE Cohen finds no genuine debt to science in the principles of the Constitution, he does detect a strange kind of scientific influence on the Declaration of Independence. With a good deal of fanfare, he proposes a new reading of the Declaration's most famous phrases.

What did Jefferson mean when he said that "the Laws of Nature and Nature's God" entitle every people to a separate and equal station among the powers of the earth? The usual interpretation, says Cohen, is that Jefferson was appealing to the "then-current concept of natural law" as promulgated by Locke and others. But Jefferson's use of the plural, *laws*, shows, according to Cohen, that he chiefly had in mind not natural law in the moral or political sense but scientific laws of motion such as those in Newton's *Principia*.

The ground for this offbeat conjecture is remarkably shaky. Cohen assembles "massive" and "overwhelming" evidence that the political philosophers who might have influenced Jefferson all used the singular "Law of Nature," and that by the 18th century the plural form had acquired unmistakably "scientific" connotations. This may be true of Locke, but it is false when it comes to Hobbes, Montesquieu, and Algernon Sidney, all of whom refer to "Laws of Nature" in a distinctly political sense. Jefferson copied excerpts from Montesquieu as a young man and later called Sidney (along with Locke) a leading source for the American understanding of the rights of man.

In any event, does Cohen really mean to suggest that Jefferson deliberately based the right of revolution on an appeal to Newton's laws of motion? Not at all: only that there were unconscious Newtonian "overtones," "echoes," and "reverberations" in Jefferson's mind when he used the phrase. Well, what if there were?

The point of all this rummaging about in Jefferson's subconscious only emerges when Cohen turns to the next paragraph of the Declaration, in which Jefferson asserts the well-known "self-evident truths" that

> all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. . . .

Here, too, Cohen is dissatisfied with the canonical interpretation of these "truths" as expressing a version of Locke's natural-law doctrine. Instead, he indulges in yet another quest for "trains of asso-

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ciation," in this case for ones that might have been set in motion by the term "self-evident."

This term, Cohen suggests, first calls to mind the axioms or "common notions" of Euclidean geometry, the truth of which is obvious and indemonstrable. But from Euclid's axioms, he continues, Jefferson's mind might well have wandered to the quite different "axioms" of Newton's *Principia*, i.e., his laws of motion, whose truth is not obvious to anyone other than a convinced Newtonian and in any case must be confirmed by experiment. The mental leap to Newton's axioms is made plausible, in Cohen's view, by the Newtonian "resonance" of Jefferson's phrase, "Laws of Nature."

In this way, Cohen argues that Jefferson, despite his words, did not really mean that the equality of men was a universal truth which nobody could rationally deny. Instead, like Newton's laws, it was "true" only for those who held it to be true, i.e., within the "universe of discourse" of a certain community of believers. And like Newton's laws, it was subject to empirical testing; that is, Jefferson's "self-evident truth" might even turn out to be false.

Is this what Jefferson really meant? It seems ironic that Cohen, who professes such admiration for the enlightened ideals of the Age of Reason, should have so little respect for Jefferson's overt reasoning as to feel compelled to ferret out unconscious mental associations to explain the "real" meaning of his words. Compare Cohen's pinched reading of the Declaration to what Abraham Lincoln said about it:

> All honor to Jefferson—to the man who . . . had the coolness, forecast, and capacity to introduce into a merely revolutionary document an abstract truth, applicable to all men and all times.

COHEN's treatment of the Declaration is not the only instance where he disparages the authorial integrity of the Founding Fathers. The sole reference to science in the Constitution is in the clause granting to Congress the power

> to promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries.

Cohen professes to be puzzled by this sentence. He cannot see how the granting of patents to inventors might promote the progress of science, since the greatest scientific advances—Newton's physics and mathematics, and Linnaeus's system for classifying plants—had "no aspect that would have been patentable." He finds it "equally difficult to conceive" how either science or the useful arts could be encouraged by granting exclusive copyrights to authors.

At a loss to understand the Constitution's words, Cohen resorts to deconstructing them. He argues that the sentence is incoherent because it is the product of a committee, each of whose members brought different ideas and agendas to the negotiating table. On his way to this dismissive conclusion, Cohen briefly entertains the thought that Madison and his colleagues might have composed the sentence in the belief, "deriving ultimately from Francis Bacon and from René Descartes, that all true science would ultimately prove to be useful." But he rejects this explanation, noting that

> by 1787 there had been only one spectacular example of disinterested or basic research in science that had led to an important invention. I refer here to the lightning rod.

But is it not obvious, first of all, how the granting of copyrights and patents serves to nourish the ambitions of scientists and inventors, to say nothing of their patrons and financial backers? Scientists are drawn not only by the beauty of knowledge but also by the glory of being the first to discover it, and copyright is a powerful tool with which to establish the priority of one's discoveries. Furthermore, modern science has from the beginning been preoccupied with the production of useful results. By making those results patentable, the Constitution enlivens the thirst for knowledge with a lust for profit.

Secondly, by discounting the influence of Bacon and Descartes on the underlying principles of the Constitution, Cohen misses an opportunity to explore what is perhaps the deepest connection of all between modern science and modern politics. In describing the Founding Fathers as "men of the Enlightenment," he seems to mean only that they venerated reason, hated superstition, and had a boundless enthusiasm for scientific inquiry of every kind, regardless of its practical value. But as the scholar Richard Kennington has written, Enlightenment is also

> an unprecedented type of political action undertaken by the founders of modern philosophy and society in the common enterprise of "the mastery of nature."

Ever since Bacon and Descartes, the mastery of nature for the benefit of all mankind has been both the implicit goal of modern science and the ground of its exalted status in society. But with the project to master nature came a radically new interpretation of nature—including human nature—as mere raw material for limitless manipulation and exploitation. On such "Enlightened" foundations, the Founding Fathers attempted to build a durable political order. But notwithstanding their benevolent intentions, it is at least questionable whether nature so conceived is truly hospitable to the inalienable rights they bequeathed to us. In this cheerful and informative volume one searches in vain for any hint of these darker implications of the Enlightenment.

Rebel With a Cause

BARRY GOLDWATER. By ROBERT ALAN GOLDBERG. *Yale. 451 pp. $27.50.*

Reviewed by RICHARD BROOKHISER

As we learn from this balanced and earnest biography by a professor of history at the Univer-

RICHARD BROOKHISER *is a senior editor of* National Review *and a columnist for the* New York Observer.

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sity of Utah, Barry Morris Goldwater was born in not too modest circumstances in Phoenix, Arizona Territory, in 1909. (In Goldwater's own crack, "I was born in a log cabin equipped with a golf course, a pool table, and a swimming pool.") His mother, an old-stock Wasp, was a descendant of Roger Williams, who founded the colony of Rhode Island in 1663. His father, a Jew though not religiously observant, owned the town's main department store.

In the late 1930's, Robert Goldberg tells us, young Goldwater took over the task of running the family business. Though management bored him, he exhibited a distinct talent for design and marketing. "You'll rant and dance with ants in your pants," ran the jingle he wrote for one of his more successful products: men's underwear emblazoned with red ants.

World War II came along and Goldwater spent it in the Army Air Corps. Returning home after the war, he found merchandising too tame for his taste and began to dabble in politics. He won a seat on the Phoenix City Council in 1949; then, in 1952, he campaigned for the United States Senate and toppled a giant—Ernest McFarland, a two-term incumbent and Democratic majority leader.

Over the next twelve years, Goldwater's presence and convictions helped to remake the Republican party. He came to Washington in a period of transition for the postwar Right. Senator Robert Taft had died in 1953, and Joseph McCarthy was censured in 1955. As old leaders fell, new intellectual spokesmen emerged, preeminent among them Russell Kirk, William F. Buckley, Jr., and Ayn Rand. Goldwater joined them in an effort to shift the party away from Eisenhower Republicanism, which he considered nothing more than a "dime-store New Deal." But Goldwater and his fellow conservatives were swimming against a powerful tide. In the 1950's and particularly in the early 60's, to be a conservative was to be a rebel, cutting against the grain not only of the intellectual class but of much of the nation as a whole. As one campus conservative quoted in this book recalls, wearing a Goldwater button in those years gave a "thrill of treason."

Goldwater himself was ambivalent about leading the conservative movement in a takeover of the party, but by the presidential season of 1964 the movement was sure it wanted *him*. "Let's draft the s.o.b.," one activist declared. Although Goldwater lost two of the Republican primaries that year—New Hampshire and Oregon—the depth of his support carried him over these setbacks, and over the party's northeastern establishment, to claim the nomination at the San Francisco convention (which Goldberg calls "the Woodstock of American conservatism").

The ensuing campaign against Lyndon Johnson taught conservatives some lasting lessons about media partisanship and dirty campaigning. In an era when the press had supposedly made itself professional, Goldwater endured a journalistic mudbath, complete, his biographer reminds us, with insinuations that he was a Nazi; Sam Donaldson of ABC referred to Goldwater's supporters as the "Bund," and Daniel Schorr of CBS reported that Goldwater would be vacationing in Berchtesgaden. *Fact*, a magazine today happily defunct, assembled a panel of psychiatrists who, without the benefit of putting the Republican candidate on the couch, diagnosed him as a "paranoid schizophrenic" and a "lunatic." The Johnson campaign contributed its own notorious touch to the demolition: a television commercial of a young girl in a meadow who one moment is picking a daisy and in the next has been obliterated by an atomic blast. The voiceover ran: "Vote for President Johnson. . . . The stakes are too high for you to stay home."

From their ordeal of near-total defeat at the polls in November 1964, conservatives inherited a mixed legacy. Many became acute and unwavering critics of the media, a disposition which later led them to give figures like Richard Nixon the benefit of too many doubts when the press reported unpleasant yet genuine facts. On the other hand, conservatives also learned from the fiasco where to look for future votes. The Gold-

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water campaign, having carried five states in the Deep South, and having made inroads in Irish and Italian Catholic precincts in the Northeast, faintly foreshadowed an electoral map that would bring victory to Republican presidential candidates in years to come.

GOLDWATER himself remained in the Senate until he retired in 1986, his last term there marred by ill health. In recent years, the career chronicled by his biographer has taken a surprising turn: he has been most often in the news for his clashes not with the Left but with the religious Right. Thus, when the Reverend Jerry Falwell of the Moral Majority questioned the nomination of Goldwater's protégée, Sandra Day O'Connor, for a seat on the Supreme Court, the Senator suggested that "every good Christian ought to kick Falwell right in the ass." Goldwater has also supported lifting the ban on homosexuals in the military, offering characteristically straight-shooting advice to President Clinton on how to finesse this controversial step: "Give the order and then shut up about it."

Goldwater's estrangement from contemporary conservatism is not a simple story. His politics had long shown a libertarian streak. His wife worked for Planned Parenthood, and in the mid-1950's Goldwater arranged for a daughter to obtain an illegal abortion. But social conservatism was a powerful theme of his 1964 presidential campaign. The platform called for prayer in the schools, and Goldwater attacked "riot and disorder in our cities," the "breakdown of morals of our young people," and the "flood of obscene literature." "The moral fiber of the American people," the candidate proclaimed, "is beset by rot and decay"; Jerry Falwell could not have said it better.

SUCH seeming inconsistencies remind us of an important fact about Barry Goldwater: he made his mark not only as politician but as a personality. His famous bluntness, his profanity, and his utter lack of pretension were crucial to the impact he had on others. In this biography, Robert Goldberg attempts to explore some of the inner dynamics of the Goldwater personality, but in the end he fails to evoke it fully. Though Goldberg has compiled a great many details about his subject and assembled them in a readable form, his book is less an essay than a compendium, and as such almost inevitably inadequate to its subject—one of the most vivid figures in recent American politics.

Still, despite this limitation, *Barry Goldwater* does offer an informative and measured account of a man who was at the center of American conservatism during the years of its lift-off. For anyone interested in understanding how the Republican party came to triumph at the polls in 1994, the life story of the politician who led it in a "lost-cause" election three decades ago would be a good place to start.

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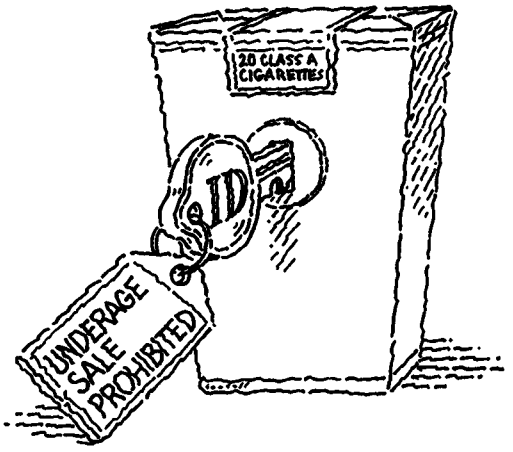

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